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The Sufi brotherhood of *Nāṣiriyya* in Morocco – its establishment and doctrine

Abstract. The article is devoted to the beginnings and religious practice of the Sufi *Nāṣiriyya* brotherhood, a branch of *Šāḍiliyya*. The brotherhood was established in the 17th century in southern Morocco, and its main religious and intellectual center from the very beginning was the town of Tāmkrūt, where a *zāwiya* still exists today with its famous library of manuscripts. The brotherhood was founded by Maḥammad Ibn Nāṣir, known as Ibn Nāṣir ad-Dar'ī (1603–1674), whose son established the central role of Tāmkrūt and can thus be regarded as the founder of this *ṭariqa*. He continued the work of his father, and *Nāṣiriyya* spread fairly quickly across the Maghrib as its followers also created *zāwiyas* in today's Tunisia and Algeria. Although *Nāṣiriyya*'s roots go back as far as the son of Abū Ṭālib, Ġa'far, it is an orthodox Sunni brotherhood that adheres to the Maliki law school, strongly connected to the central authorities of Morocco. The article also presents the figure of Ibn Nāṣir, a widely recognized mystic and theologian, and a Muslim lawyer. His main work is *Al-Aḡwiba an-Nāṣiriyya* ["An-Nāṣirī's Response"] a text of predominantly legal character. However, his prayer in verse, known widely as *Sayf Ibn Nāṣir* ["The Sword of Ibn Nāṣir"] is especially popular. The article also dedicates a few paragraphs to his son, Aḥmad al-Ḥalīfa. Further in the article, an outline is provided concerning the mystical rituals of *Nāṣiriyya*, originating from the brotherhood's founder.

Keywords: Islam, Sufism, Morocco, *Nāṣiriyya*, Ibn Nāṣir

Introduction

The variety and role of mystical brotherhoods in Morocco are facts well known to those researching Islam and the Arab world. There is a dense network of Sufi *zāwiyas*,¹ and their leaders and innumerable Marabouts (popular religious sufi leaders) play a vital role in the social and political life of the country. The best known Moroccan brotherhoods include *Tiġāniyya*,² *Darqāwiyya*,³ *ʿĪsāwiyya*⁴ and *Šādiliyya* (Trimingham, 1971, pp. 47–51). Among those of greatest importance, *Nāširiyya*, a branch of *Šādiliyya* has been included since 12th century. It was from this brotherhood that *Nāširiyya*'s founder came – of *Šarīfi* roots (the Ġaʿfari branch),⁵ Maḥammad (Muḥammad⁶) Ibn Nāšir, known as Ibn Nāšir ad-Darī (1603–1674), also called “A Reformer of *Ṭarīqa*” (*Muġaddid aṭ-Ṭarīqa [aš-Šādiliyya]*) (Depont & Coppolani, 1987, pp. 479–481; Michaux-Bellaire, 1923, p. 31; Spillmann, 1938, pp. 205–223; Trimingham, 1971, p. 88; Hammoudi, 1980; Bodin, 1918, pp. 259–295; Al-Nāširiyya, 2001; Gutelius, 2002, pp. 27–49; 2004, pp. 450–471; Aṭ-Ṭarīqa an-Nāširiyya, 2023). Another branch of *Nāširiyya* is, among others, *Zayyāniyya* (Spillmann, 1938, p. 214). Despite *Nāširiyya*'s role in the religious, social, economic, and political life of Morocco, relatively few monographs have been devoted to it in the West. There was some interest in *Nāširiyya* among the French researchers starting at the turn of 19th and 20th century (Bodin, 1918; Spillmann, 1938), and a few works, also outside the Francophone circles, appeared recently (Hammoudi, 1980; Gutelius, 2004), and yet Annemarie Schimmel (1975) does not mention this brotherhood in her fundamental compendium, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, and Joseph S. Trimingham (1971) makes a passing reference to *Nāširiyya* only in a footnote, while discussing other issues, without devoting to it a single, separate paragraph. The entry discussing the brotherhood in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* is also rather modest.

¹ Seat of a sufi order.

² *Tiġāniyya* – one of the most popular mystic brotherhoods in North and West Africa, it is a branch *Qādiriyya*, founded by Aḥmad at-Tiġānī (1735–1815) (Trimingham, 1971, pp. 107–110; Wright, 2005).

³ *Darqāwiyya*, *Darqāwa* – a Sufi brotherhood founded at the end of the 18th century by an Idrisid *Šarīf* Mawlāy al-ʿArabī ad-Darqāwī (1760–1823), deriving from *Šādiliyya*. One of the most popular brotherhoods in the northern Morocco and western Algeria (Trimingham, 1971, pp. 110–114; Depont & Coppolani, 1987, pp. 503–513).

⁴ Also: *ʿAysāwiyya* (Nabti, 2010).

⁵ *Šarīfs* are the descendants of the Prophet (van Arendonk & Graham, 2001).

⁶ There are differences in the sources concerning the actual name of Ibn Nāšir, the Arabic sources usually give it as Maḥammad.

Nāṣiriyya was most popular in Morocco, but it spread throughout Algeria and Tunisia (Depont & Coppolani, 1987, pp. 479–481), where its numerous centres continue to operate in the most important cities (Fez, Marrakesh, Rabat, Salé, Oran, Constantine, Algiers) as well as throughout the countryside. The main centre of the brotherhood's intellectual life until this day is the southern Moroccan town of Tāmkrūt (also: Tamkrūt), which will be discussed further in the article.

The article is primarily historical and descriptive. In this text, I rely mostly on sources in Arabic written mainly by people associated with the brotherhood.

Maḥammad Ibn Nāṣir

The founder of the brotherhood, Ibn Nāṣir is a character that still enjoys great respect in Morocco in this day (comp. the biographical note on Ibn Nāṣir, among others in: An-Nāṣirī, 1987, vol. I, p. 126 ff.; Bodin, 1918, pp. 263–270; Maḥlūf, 2003, p. 453; Al-Yūsī, 2004, pp. 80–91; Al-Yafrānī, 2004, pp. 299–303; Hammoudi, 1980, p. 618 ff.; Spillmann, 1938, pp. 206–207). He is described in the following words by the most eminent Moroccan, 19th-century historian, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥālīd an-Nāṣirī: “In 1085⁷ the *ṣayḥ* of the *Sunna*, *imam* of *ṭarīqa*, Abū ‘Abd Allāh Sīdī Maḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥusayn Ibn Nāṣir Ibn ‘Amr ad-Darī al-Iḡlānī⁸, known as Ibn Nāṣir, died [...]. His student, *ṣayḥ* Abū ‘Alī al-Yūsī says in his *Fahrāsa* [“Catalogue”]: ‘Our *ṣayḥ* was, may God rejoice in him, knowledgeable in many subjects, such as *fiqh*, Arabic, *kalām*, *tafsīr*, *hadiths* and Sufism. He was a pious, God-fearing hermit and ascetic, he knew the principles of *ṭarīqa* and observed them, he drank from the source of true wisdom. He learned from the knowledge of others and followed the path they set for the *ṭarīqa*. He delved deep into knowledge, studying, writing and analysing, and God made him useful to two groups. People came to him from the East and from the West, they studied under him, listened to his words, witnessed his deeds and how he strove to achieve higher levels of learning, pursuing true knowledge, keenly seeking the light with full conviction and maturity. When he spoke the words would penetrate deep into their hearts, and when he gave a warning, he would point to the good, not the evil. Then the *ṣayḥ*, Al-Yūsī continues his story and recalls the numerous miracles (*karamāt*). He also composed a panegyric in his honour, rhyming

⁷ A precise date is given by Al-Yafrānī, 2004, p. 295: 16 *Ṣafar* 1085 = 22nd May 1674 CE.

⁸ Maḥammad was born in Aḡlān (Iḡlān).

with the letter *dāl*.⁹ [...] He had eminent teachers and students, mentioned in the *imāms'* books, who spoke on this subject.¹⁰ His *ṭarīqa* is widely known and closely associated with God's Messenger, Peace be upon Him. His father, Sīdī Muḥammad Ibn Amad was one of the great *walīs* ('saints') who recited prayers frequently, and his tongue never tired from recitation of *dīkr*,¹¹ in accordance with what was reported by many people. And God, the Supreme, knows best. [...] This *ṣayḥ* was our ancestor and we descend from him" (An-Nāṣirī, 2001, vol. VI, pp. 130–132; comp. the biographical note on Ibn Nāṣir, among others in: An-Nāṣirī, 1987, vol. I, pp. 126 ff.; Bodin, 1918, pp. 263–270; Maḥlūf, 2003, p. 453; Al-Yūsī, 2004, pp. 80–91; Al-Yafrānī, 2004, pp. 299–303; Hammoudi, 1980, p. 618 ff.).

These *karamāt* were, in fact, described more extensively by Al-Yafrānī¹² in *Ṣafwat man intaṣar min ulaḥā' al-qarn al-ḥādī 'aṣar* ["The elite who spread or tales of the excellent men of the 11th century"]. Maḥammad's brother, Ḥusayn related a story of how he saw, with his own eyes, how when a *ṣayḥ* was sitting, surrounded by his wives, and a cockerel was nearby. Suddenly, the cockerel started to crow. Then unexpectedly, in the clearest voice, it spoke the words *Allāh, Allāh*, and then went back to crowing. On another occasion, he prophesied correctly, to a day, the death of one of the *'ālims*. It was also because of him that God took his father from hell into heaven (Al-Yafrānī, 2004, p. 302).

Ibn Nāṣir collected manuscripts and he also was a scribe. His love of books was so great that sometimes, as some reported, Ibn Nāṣir allegedly would purposefully not return the borrowed volumes to their owners. He slept among his students on the ground as he had no money for a bed. When his students bought him a bed, he preferred to put his books there. Maḥammad Ibn Nāṣir was buried in the *zāwiya* in Tāmkrūt.

Ibn Nāṣir was a very influential personality in the context of Morocco as a whole, which was noticed also by European travellers and researchers even at the end of 19th century, such as the French Trappist monk, Charles de Foucauld (1858–1916) (Fremantle, 1950), who claimed that even the sultan considered Ibn Nāṣir's opinion and memory of him was still very strong (Depont & Coppolani, 1987, pp. 480–481).

⁹ Comp. the text of the panegyric with the author's own comment: Al-Yūsī, no date and place.

¹⁰ The entire *silsila* of Ibn Nāṣir's masters is listed by Al-Yūsī 2004, pp. 84–91, some of them are mentioned also by An-Nāṣirī, 1987, p. 133.

¹¹ A sort of sufi prayer – MMD.

¹² Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad al-Yafrani, also known as Al-Ifrani, but also as Wafrani and Ufrani (died 1700), Moroccan historian specialising in biographies.

Ibn Nāṣir was the author of several works in Sufism, Islamic law, and grammar, but these works, as far as the author of this paper knows, are still in manuscript form. The most famous of these is a lecture concerning the views of the *ṣayḥ*, titled *Al-Aḡwiba an-Nāṣiriyya* [“Responses of An-Nāṣiri”]. *Aḡwiba* is a type of collection of *fatwas* concerning various aspects of a Muslim’s life – these applied to important aspects of economic life due to the role of *Nāṣiriyya* in organising trade in the Dar‘ā river valley at least until the beginning of the 18th century, which was described in detail by David Gutelius in both texts quoted in this article. It presents the views of the author while, at the same time, reflects the interpretation of selected aspects of Islamic law of the Maliki school with the *Nāṣiriyya* interpretation. Currently, there are several manuscripts of the work available online, and the most recent edition of the “Responses” was published in 2012, in Beirut (Ibn Nāṣir, 2012). Such collections were published also by the subsequent *ṣayḥs* of *Nāṣiriyya*.

Another, even better known work, is *Ad-Du‘ā’ an-Nāṣir* [“The Nāṣiri Supplication”], written in verse, known also as *Sayf Ibn Nāṣir* [“The Sword of Ibn Nāṣir”] (The Sword of Ibn Nasir, 2023). Brockelmann (1902, vol. II, p. 462) refers to it as *Sayf an-naṣr* or “The Sword of Victory.” Its text can be found on numerous web pages, it is also frequently performed as a chant, and not just by the brotherhood members – the recordings of such performances can be found, for example, on the popular video service, YouTube. A famous performer of this prayer is today, among others, the renowned Moroccan singer, ‘Abd al-Hādī Bal-Ḥayyāt (born 1940). The prayer is occasionally included as an annex to some editions of *Dalā’il al-ḥayrāt* [“The Guide of Good”] by Al-Ġazūli,¹³ next to *Al-Burda* and *Hamziyya* by Al-Būṣiri¹⁴ and *Aṣ-Ṣalāt al-Mašīsiyya* [„Al-Mašīš’ Prayer”].¹⁵ The work is approximately 80 verses (*bayts*) in size – it is purposefully given in quotation marks, because this is how it is customarily written, but its rhyme structure indicates that it should rather be written in one column. This is the beginning of this text:

<i>Yā man ilā rahmatihī al-maḥarru</i>	<i>wa-man ilayhi yalḡa’u al-muḍṭarru</i>
<i>Wa-yā qarība al-‘afwi yā mawlāhu</i>	<i>Wa-yā muḡīta kulli man da‘āhu</i>
<i>Bi-ka istaḡaṭnā yā muḡīta aḍ-ḍu‘afā</i>	<i>Fa-ḥasbunā yā Rabbī anta wa-kafā</i>

¹³ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad al-Ġazūli (d. 1450), a Muslim scholar and mystic, founder of the *Ġazūliyya* brotherhood (Bencheneb, 2001).

¹⁴ Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Būṣiri (1212–1296), poet and mystic (Smith, 2015, pp. 289–327).

¹⁵ Ibn Mašīš (1140–1227/1228), famous Moroccan Sufi, teacher to, among others, Aṣ-Ṣādīli (Burckhardt, 1967). All the texts are included together, for example, in the edition: Al-Ġazūli, 2004, pp. 169–177.

O You to Whose mercy one flees!

You in Whom the one in need and distress seeks refuge!

O Master, You Whose pardon is near!

O You Who help all who call on Him!

We seek Your help, O You who help the weak!

You are enough for us, O Lord! (Al-Ġazūli, 2004, p. 169)

Tāmkrūt and Nāširiyya

From the very beginning, the main centre of the brotherhood was the *zāwiya* in Tāmkrūt, founded in 1575/1576 (Lévi-Provençal, 2001; Bodin, 1918, p. 261; description of Tāmkrūt comp. e.g. de Segonzac, 1910, pp. 89–90) and one which is still operating today. As the centre of *Nāširiyya*, it was organised by the son of its founder, and the subsequent *šayḥs* were the descendants of Ibn Nāšir¹⁶. Son of Maḥammad, known as Aḥmad al-Ḥalifa (d. 1717) is also an interesting personality, who became a fixed point in the history of Moroccan culture. He is the author of, among others, a valuable history of his travel from Siġilmāsa to Mecca in the years 1709–1710, he also wrote his own *Aġwiba*.¹⁷ The history of the brotherhood until the end of 19th century is best described by the historian, referenced herein, Aḥmad an-Nāširī in *Ṭalʿat al-Muštari fī an-nasab al-Ġaʿfarī*. An-Nāširī provided evidence of his family's lineage as direct descendants of ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Ġaʿfar Ibn Abi Ṭālib. Ġaʿfar, also called Aṭ-Ṭayyār, was the older brother of ʿAli Ibn Abi Ṭālib.¹⁸ As Évariste Lévi-Provençal (2003, p. 33) writes, this work is, at the same time, a wonderful story of the *zāwiya* in Tāmkrūt, which contains a wealth of interesting information, which truly evidences the authenticity of the author's family's genealogy. A list of the successors of Maḥammad and Aḥmad, with interesting facts concerning their activities, is provided by Georges Spillmann. In the field, the brotherhood's leaders were represented by the *muqaddams* whom the brotherhood's head would contact mainly via correspondence and numerous such letters have survived until today.

¹⁶ The succession of *šayḥs* at *Nāširiyya* from Ibn Nāšir to the beginning of 19th century: Hammoudi, 1980, p. 625; to 1937: Spillmann, 1938, pp. 208–213.

¹⁷ Biographical note, see: Al-Qādirī, 1986, vol. III, pp. 234–235; Ad-Darī, 2011; Spillmann, 1938, pp. 207–208.

¹⁸ Spillmann gives the precise genealogy going as far back as Ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib to 12th *šayḥ* of the *zāwiya* in Tāmkrūt Sidi ʿAbd as-Salām an-Nāširī, who led the brotherhood in 1937 (Spillmann, 1938, p. 220).

Tāmkrūt, although located away from the major urban centres in Morocco, primarily away from Moroccan capitals, played an important role in the religious and cultural life of the country until a *Šādili zāwiya* was founded there. This was confirmed by a contemporary historian, Muḥammad Ḥaḡḡi (1978, pp. 549–550) and from the period before Ibn Nāṣir, he listed two important people connected with that centre: Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad at-Tamkrūtī (d. 1569) and ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Muḥammad at-Tamkrūtī (d. around 1572), who were involved not only in Sufi teachings, but also delved into grammar and law. From its very beginning, the *zāwiya* was also connected with a *madrassa*. Initially focused on educating solely Sufis, but from Ibn Nāṣir’s time it expanded its scope of teachings by including such subjects as mathematics, economy, and geography. David Gutelius emphasised the high level of education in Tāmkrūt in all the subjects. This researcher also claims that it was even higher than at the Al-Qarawiyyīn University in Fez. In religious teachings, this is evidenced by the fact that *fiqh* or *furū’* was taught on the basis of original works and not their abbreviated versions, as it was usually practised in those times (Gutelius, 2004, pp. 26–27). Bodin, referencing Aḥmad an-Nāṣirī, provides a list of religious works which were studied at the *zāwiya* in Tāmkrūt – all of them belong to the Sunni orthodoxy in the Maliki version (Bodin 1918, p. 283).

A treasured part of the *zāwiya* was its library. Ibn Nāṣir’s love of books gave rise to the Tāmkrūt library, which exists still today. Its collection comprises close to five thousand manuscripts, including very valuable ones, from various branches of knowledge. The collection as of 1985 is presented in the catalogue prepared by Muḥammad al-Manūnī (1985), and in 2013 another catalogue was published, listing 4777 entries (Laḥmar, 2013). The *Dār al-Kutub an-Nāṣiriyya* is regarded as one of the best libraries in Morocco, especially when it comes to manuscripts. Today the *zāwiya* operates in a building which was reconstructed after a fire destroyed it in 1869.

Bodin and Spillmann also list other *Nāṣiriyya’s zāwiyas* in the country which were established by the brotherhood from its very beginnings (Bodin, 1918, pp. 292–293; Spillmann, 1938, pp. 214–215, 220–221; Hammoudi, 1980, p. 630, distribution on the map cf. Hammoudi, 1980, pp. 632–633). The former records that the total number of *Nāṣiriyya’s zāwiyas* in Maghreb was approximately 300 in 19th century (Bodin, 1918, p. 292), while in 1937, Spillmann (1938, p. 219) remarks that over 120 of *zāwiyas* were operated by Tāmkrūt. De Foucauld indicates that in the second half of 19th century, except for the central *zāwiya* in Tāmkrūt, which was headed by Sīdī Muḥammad Ū Bū Bakr, the centres in Wazzān (Mawlāy ‘Abd as-Salām), Bū (Abū) Ġād (Sīdī Ibn Dāwud), Madḡar (Muḥammad al-‘Arabī ad-Darqāwī), and Tizirwāld (Sīdī al-Ḥusayn) (de Foucauld, 1888, p. 293) were of greatest significance.

Nāṣiriyya's zāwiyas were not just centres of worship and teaching, but, in time, transformed into a combination of hostels, shopping centres, marketplaces, and pilgrimage centres, where people could meet and cooperate at various levels and in various areas, which granted these centres their unique character, a safe space that facilitated social cooperation and consolidation. In this context, the greatest significance fell to Tāmkrūt, but other *zāwiyas* were also adopting this character (Gutelius, 2004, pp. 35–36).

Notes on the doctrine and rites of *Nāṣiriyya*

The principles of *Nāṣiriyya* were, obviously, closely related to the religious formation of its founder, which, according to Abdallah Hammoudi, exhibited attachment to orthodox Islamic teachings, respect for the sunnah, and closely following in the Prophet's footsteps on the one hand while searching for a path to initiation and mystic knowledge on the other. Ibn Nāṣir rejected the common law and anything that had no basis in the Qur'an and the Prophet's tradition, which the mystic emphasised in his *Aḡwiba*. While he never considered himself a *Mahdī* or a *muḡāhid*, he was also no ecstatic. He was very negative about any superstitions and magical practices, including alchemy, he forbade dancing and singing during recitation of God's names (Hammoudi, 1980, p. 281; Spillmann, 1938, pp. 211–213), as well as smoking of tobacco and using narcotic substances (Bodin, 1918, p. 285). *Nāṣiriyya* was also reluctant towards *ḡihād*, because they believed that such actions were usually based in really low ambitions of rulers, which Ibn Nāṣir highlighted in *Al-Aḡwiba* (Hammoudi, 1980, p. 635); the brotherhood was also averse towards all "novelties" (*bid'a*) (Ibn Nāṣir, 2023a). *Nāṣiriyya's* doctrine essentially did not contain many new elements in comparison to *Šādiliyya* (Danecki, 2007, pp. 407–409), and it was determined by a skilful-enough combination of *'ilm* ["wisdom"] with *taṣawwuf* ["mysticism"] so that Ibn Nāṣir and his followers could not be accused of heterodoxy by the *'ālims*. The simplicity of the principles helped *Nāṣiriyya* quickly gain more followers. Ibn Nāṣir himself wrote: „My path is straight, and its merits are great” (Gutelius, 2002, p. 32).

Nāṣiriyya continued the numerous traditions of earlier brotherhoods, including in its organisational structure. *Nāṣiriyya's* leaders emphasised the role of social activism in connection with spiritual renewal and scientific and educational achievements (Spillmann 1938, pp. 210–211). Their inspiration was Abū al-Ḥasan aš-Šādīlī, but they did not identify with his most famous student, Al-Ġazūlī (Gutelius, 2004, p. 31). Social activism was also intertwined with political activism (Spillmann, 1938, pp 215–219). Although, in theory,

Sufism declares independence of politics, in this case one can observe the constant and clear connections of the brotherhood with *Maḥzan* (a Moroccan equivalent of a government/central authority), which certainly must have been the result of the brotherhood's lively economic activities that gradually expanded into international trade with Europe (Gutelius, 2004, p. 45 ff.).

For example, in 19th century, in the conflicts which erupted between tribes and the central authorities the brotherhood stayed on *Maḥzan*'s, which extended the tradition introduced by Ibn Nāṣir. It frequently played the role of a judge in disputes between tribes and the government, and this role stemmed from the universal respect for Islamic law and sunnah (Hammoudi, 1980, p. 629). The individual *zāwiyas*, in regions controlled by the brotherhood, also ensured safety on the roads. The brotherhood's members initially came almost exclusively from the Wādī Dar'ā region (Trimingham, 1971, p. 234), thus *Nāṣiriyya* had essentially a house-tribe character,¹⁹ which only changed later.

Indirectly, *Nāṣiriyya*'s views can be deduced on the basis of the works by Aḥmad an-Nāṣirī, a historian, who was, in a manner of speaking, connected to Sufism throughout his life. Starting from a Salafist viewpoint, he was very critical of any “novelty” introduced to Islam also by the Sufi, which he elaborated broadly in his work titled *Ta'zīm al-minna bi-nuṣrat as-sunna* [“Elevation of love or on the victory of the sunnah”] (An-Nāṣirī, 2012, vol. II, pp. 476–792). For example, he opposed any ecstatic practices during *dīkr*, singing, music and dancing. He criticised the participation of “beardless youth” in Sufi practice and the joint Sufi practice by men and women. He also opposed the various folk beliefs associated with *Maraboutism*, a popular form of sufism. However, he did not condone, for example, the worship of the “Friends of” Allah (*Walī Allāh*).

Trimingham claims that the scholar criticised above all the new Sufi *ṭarīqas*, while he accepted the ones which were deemed “orthodox,” such as *Nāṣiriyya*, *Tiḡāniyya* or *Darqāwiyya* (Trimingham, 1971, p. 247). Trimingham based this claim not on *Ta'zīm al-minna*, but mainly on a fragment of *Kitāb al-istiḡṣā*, where An-Nāṣirī unequivocally criticised mystical brotherhoods, writing that, especially in 16th century, many Maghrebis became involved with the “disgusting propaganda” – *da'wa qabiḥa* – which focused on the belief in supernatural powers of the then contemporary and earlier *ṣayḥs* (An-Nāṣirī, 2001, vol. I, p. 204), which was in opposition to the 64th verse of the 3rd surah, *Family of Imran*: “O People of the Book! come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allah” (*Qur'an*, no date).

¹⁹ This aspect is described in rather much detail by Hammoudi, 1980.

As for the rituals observed at *Nāṣiriyya*, their based on the *ḍikr* and *wird* (another sufi prayer form). Unfortunately, information about this issue varies depending on the time and author, therefore one can primarily point to the most important elements of the ritual. *Al-Wird an-Nāṣirī*, which was used in the brotherhood's beginnings, is described by Aḥmad al-Ḥalīfa in his letter to the 'ālim, Muḥammad Ibn al-Mu'ṭī aš-Šarqī (also: aš-Šarqāwī; d. 1727). This letter is quoted by A. an-Nāṣirī in *Tal'at al-Muštari*: "[If] you want to join the *Nāṣiriyya* brotherhood (*az-zamra an-Nāṣiriyya*), then I welcome you cordially (*ahlan wa-sahlan*). Repentance (*tawba*) is necessary in accordance with the principles (*bi-šurūḥihā*). Repeat every day: *Istağfara Allāh* ('God, forgive me') a hundred times. [Then say] *Allahumma, allā 'alā sayyidinā Muḥammad an-Nabī al-Amīn wa-'alā Ālihi wa-Šuḥubihī* ('bless our Lord, Muḥammad, a Faithful of the Prophet, for his House and his Companions'). Utter the *taslīm*²⁰ one hundred times, [then] *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* one thousand times. After each hundred repetitions say *Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh allā Allāhu 'alayhi wa-sallam* ('Muḥammad is the God's Prophet, may God bless for Him and grant Him Peace'). [This should be done] in the time from the morning prayer (*ṣalāt aš-ṣubḥ*) one day till the morning prayer of the following day, so there is ample time. And the best time is between the morning prayer and at sunrise (*ṭulū' aš-šams*). Whatever you can do during that time, do it, and what you cannot manage, postpone it till later, when you will be able. This will cause no harm. Utter this one hundred times when sitting, standing, walking, and napping, after ablutions and before them, but after ablutions is best, and when talking. The most important thing is the presence of heart and mind (*ḥuḍūr al-qalb wa-at-tafakkur*) as you do it, in accordance with the principles provided at the end of *Šarḥ aš-Šuğrā* by As-Sanūsī²¹" (An-Nāṣirī, 1987, vol. II, p. 72).

With time, the rituals also incorporated recitation of Qur'an (5 *ḥizb*²² on one day), the collection of prayers *Dalā'il al-ḥayrāt* three times each Friday, while on other days, it was one third of this prayer book, fragments of works by Ibn Nāṣir (except the already mentioned *Kitāb al-ḡanīma*), Aš-Šādīlī, Aḥmad Zarrūq,²³ Abū al-Mawāhib at-Tūnusī²⁴ et al., as well as selected hadiths

²⁰ The words: *As-Salām 'alaykum*.

²¹ This concerns the commentary by Muḥammad Ibn Yūsuf as-Sanūsī (d. about 1486) to his work *ʿAqīdat ahl at-tawḥīd aš-šuğrā* also known as *Umm al-barāhīn*, a work particularly prized in Maghrib and concerning *uṣūl ad-dīn* and *kalām* in the Ash'ari-Maliki version.

²² 1/30 part of the Qur'an.

²³ Aḥmad az-Zarrūq al-Fāsī (1442–1493), a Maliki and Sufi scholar, initially connected to Morocco, he spent part of his life in Egypt, he died in Libya. The founder of the brotherhood *Zarrūqiyya* deriving from *Šādīliyya*, and his most famous work is *Qawā'id at-taṣawwuf* (modern edition Dimašq 2004).

²⁴ Abū al-Mawāhib aš-Šādīlī at-Tūnusī (d. around 1417), a mystic from the *Šādīliyya* brotherhood, author of, among others, the work *Al-Iṣārāt wa-al-biṣārāt*, he operated in Egypt.

and God's Most Beautiful Names. There are special prayers dedicated to and reserved for special occasions in the Islamic calendar: 1. *Muḥarram* (New Year),²⁵ the 'Āṣūrā', the last Wednesday of *Ṣafar*,²⁶ the night of mid *Ša'bān*,²⁷ *Laylat al-Qadr*, Day of 'Arafa (9 *Dū al-Ḥiġġa*) and the last day of the year (Spillmann, 1938, pp. 222–223). A modern member of the brotherhood, Muḥammad al-Makkī Ibn Nāṣir (Ibn Nāṣir, 2023a; 2023b) reports that currently the *wird* is performed directly after the morning prayer and includes a prayer for forgiveness (*istiġfār*), the prayer for the Prophet, and the formula *lā ilāha illā Allāh* uttered 1000 times. This is the so-called simple *wird*. The second type of *wird* is for the ordinary members of the brotherhood ('*awāmm*) – and during this, one must utter the words *lā ilāha illā Allāh* 7000 times, while the third type is for women – each of the elements should be recited 100 times. Repeating *lā ilāha illā Allāh* at any possible moment of the day, including during work, is also recommended. *Simā'* is considered a novelty. However, the founder of the brotherhood emphasised that this did not make a *murīd*, but the strength and piety. Absolute obedience to the *šayḥ* is not required, and the *murīd* do not need to live in specific housing or wear a distinctive clothing, signs or symbols. The brotherhood attached little significance to any initiation rituals and membership was of a rather casual nature (Gutelius, 2004, p. 32).

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The brotherhood operates until this day and remains connected with the An-Nāṣiri family. There are numerous *zāwiyas* in many towns and cities, there is the famous library in Salé (*Al-Maktaba / Al-Ḥizāna an-Nāṣiriyya*) still operating and connected partially to the family and partially to the brotherhood. In Rabat, there is the *Al-Mu'assasa an-Nāṣiriyya li-at-Taqqāfa wa-al-'Ilm*. The central facility of the brotherhood in Tāmkrūt is expanding its broad religious and scientific activity, primarily in Sufism, which is documented both through publications as well as on *Nāṣiriyya's* web page. The page contains both historic information as well as that on the brotherhood's current affairs.

²⁵ In principle, the New Year's eve is not a religious holiday.

²⁶ According to the beliefs that stem from folk Islam on this day the Earth is visited by 320 thousand misfortunes, which must be propitiated. The majority of legal schools regards these beliefs and the associated prayers as *bid'a*, but they are popular among the Sufis.

²⁷ A holiday in the memory of changing the *qibla* from Jerusalem to Mecca.

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