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Mecca in Morocco

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Stellingen

Behorend bij het proefschrift

Mecca in Morocco:

Articulations of the Muslim pilgrimage (Hajj) in Moroccan everyday life

Kholoud Al-Ajarma

1. While the Hajj can be characterized as a five-day religious ritual, it is better understood as a social, material, cultural, psychological – and spiritual - experience requiring years of preparation and having life-long consequences (the PhD thesis).
2. Through repetitive and retelling of Hajj stories the pilgrimage experience is honed into the minds of narrators and becomes a lingering legacy to be savored throughout life and passed on as a desirable act to others (cf. chapter three).
3. Within the narrative conventions of Hajj storytelling, spiritual experiences tend to be viewed as transcending the boundaries of the efficacy of language to convey them, resulting in the adoption of metaphorical tropes, coupled with mystical or magical references (cf. chapter three).
4. The social ramifications of ascribing the traditional honorific title of *ḥājj* or *ḥājjā* to those who have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca extend far beyond the simple recognition of a religious duty accomplished (cf. chapter four).
5. The Hajj both reproduces, expresses and reinforces concepts of Muslim unity while, paradoxically, also stimulating reflection on and interrogation of personal and national identity (cf. chapter five).
6. The desire of pilgrims to evoke an idealized Islamic past by walking in the footsteps of the Prophet is often contradicted, even subverted, by the modern politically and culturally produced material context of Hajj (the PhD thesis, cf. chapter six).
7. Although the Hajj ritual expresses equality of all Muslims in the eyes of God, in practice class and gender play a significant role in Moroccan conceptions of a person's worthiness of the social prestige that comes with the honorific title of *ḥājj* or *ḥājjā* that is accorded to those having performed the pilgrimage (the PhD thesis, cf. chapter seven).
8. In a context where culturally predetermined gender roles hamper women's equal participation in the Hajj, female Muslims seek to exercise power and agency through a range of compensatory avenues (cf. chapter seven).
9. Allowing a sense of the Hajj by proxy for those who are denied access to prestigious forms of religious experiences, the Pilgrimage of the Poor constitutes both a spiritual alternative to and challenge to orthodoxy (cf. chapter eight).
10. Since they symbolize the Muslim ideal of perfection, cultural productions like stories and songs about Mecca and the Hajj constitute a sociocultural space where people can express their piety and personal longings for the pilgrimage, evoke strong emotions, and convey moral lessons to others (cf. chapters nine & ten).
11. For native speakers of Levantine dialects of Arabic, mastering the vocabulary and grammar of Darija (Moroccan-Arabic) is journey into the further richness of the Arabic language and the key to successful fieldwork in Morocco. As Nelson Mandela said: "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart."