



AḤMAD KHATTŪ

AḤMAD KHATTŪ, also known as Aḥmad MAĠREBĪ, famous medieval Gujarati saint whose name is associated with the foundation of the city of Ahmadabad (b. Delhi, 737/1336; d. Sarkhej, 10 Šawwal 849/9 January 1446). It is said that, born into a noble family, Aḥmad was separated from his parents by a cyclone and fell into the hands of Bābā Ešhāq, a saint of the Maġrebī order, who brought him up and later initiated him into the *selsela*. He was educated in Delhi and then accompanied his spiritual master to Khattu, near Nagaur, in Rajasthan, where he lived till the latter's death in 776/1374-75. He then left to make a pilgrimage to holy places in Arabia, Iraq, and Iran. In 800/1398 when Tīmūr invaded India, he was living in Delhi and taken prisoner, but was later released when his spiritual qualities became known. Allegedly through his intercession Delhi escaped the wrath of Tīmūr (Badā'unī, I, p. 270), who took the saint with him back to Samarqand. When allowed to return to India, Aḥmad settled at Sarkhej, six miles southwest of the later city of Ahmadabad, where he attained his greatest fame. According to tradition, it was at his insistence that Sultan Aḥmad Shah I (813-46/1411-42) founded the city of Ahmadabad. Other rulers of Gujarat also treated him with respect. In addition to being a scholar of the traditional sciences, he wrote poetry in Persian (some is quoted in his *malfūzāt*) and had an aptitude for music. Aḥmad Khattū's magnificent mausoleum at Sarkhej and the complex of buildings surrounding it were begun by Moḥammad Shah II (846-55/1442-51) and completed by Qoṭb-al-dīn Shah (855-63/1451-58). Because of their deep attachment to him, Sultan Maḥmūd Begāra and Sultan Moḥammad II were buried in the shadow of his tomb.



Besides his poetry, the only extant writing of Shaikh Aḥmad is a *resāla* dedicated to Sultan Aḥmad Shah. Ḥājjī Dabīr used a commentary on this *resāla*, *Šarḥ-e resāla*, by Abū Ḥamīd b. Ebrāhīm, in preparing an account of the shaikh's life (*Ẓafar al-wāleh* I, p. 1). Several collections of Aḥmad's *malḥūzāt*, were compiled: *Toḥfat al-maǧāles* by Maḥmūd b. Sa'd b. Šadr Šūfī Erǧī (India Office Library, D.P. 979; ed. Sayyed Abū Ẓafar Nadvī [from another ms.], Azamgarh, n.d.); *Malḥūz* by Moḥammad b. Abi'l-Qāsem, apparently based on the *Toḥfa* (Ivanov, *Cat. A.S.B.*, pp. 91-93); *Maqāmāt-e Šayḳ Aḥmad Maǧrebī*, referred to by Badā'ūnī (I, p. 271) but no longer available. *Toḥfat al-maǧāles*, according to the author's own statement (fols. 2a-4a), was compiled with the permission of the saint, though one may doubt that Aḥmad ever checked the text. Important facts are so interwoven with miracles that the real Aḥmad Khattū has been obscured. As a *malḥūz*, it must be adjudged a work of inferior quality; its importance derives from the information it provides about the saint and his relations with contemporary Sufis and sultans, as well as its unusually vivid account of Tīmūr's invasion of Delhi.

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