INTRODUCTION

KITĀB IQTIḌĀʾ AL-ṢIRĀT al-mustaqīm mukhālafat aṣḥāb al-jaḥīm is perhaps the longest of the numerous tirades against Muslims' praying at gravesites, joining in or imitating Jewish or Christian festivals that the Hanbali legal scholar, Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328) wrote. In it he asserted: "Thus, participation with them (non-Muslims) in their festivals wholly or partly, is synonymous with participation with them in unbelief wholly or partly. Nay, festivals are that which most particularly serves to differentiate one religious law from another and constitute their most prominent symbols".[1] He similarly condemned the play and entertainment associated with festivals even when the participants attached little or no religious significance to these activities:

> But lavish indulgence in customs of food, clothing, sport and recreation is simply a corollary of the religious festival, just as it is a corollary in an Islamic festival…the innovators change everyday conditions or part of them by preparing special food, by display of finery in garb, or by incurring additional expenditure, etc. without, however attaching any religious significance to the newfangled customs. This of course is most abominable and of gravest religious consequence, and so is the conformity with the God-displeasing ones.[2]

Ibn Taymiyya was infamous, even in his own day, for his vehement opposition to "popular" religious practices which many of his co-religionists, Jews, and Christians, held dear, so much so that he ended his life imprisoned for his views.[3] Despite opposition to him within the Muslim community itself, his opinions were representative of a number of Muslim legalists, predominately from the Mālikī school of law from which Ibn Taymiyya drew heavily, who were writing anti-*bidaʿ* (innovation) treatises from al-Andalus, the Maghrib, Egypt, and the Levant from the tenth to the sixteenth centuries CE.[4] These treatises, along with Jewish and Christian as well as Muslim pilgrimage narratives, guides, chronicles, hagiographic literature, commentaries, and letters provide windows into a series of interrelated phenomena in the Mediterranean, namely the shared participation by members of different religious communities in the celebration of various religious festivals, group prayers, the veneration of holy spaces and of saints both living and dead. Ibn Taymiyya's assertions that: 1) the adoption of the symbols or practices of

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1 فان الموافقة فى جميع العيد : موافقة فى الكفر والموافقة فى بعض فروعه: موافقة فى بعض شعب الكفر, بل الاعياد هى من أخص ما تتميز به بين الشعائر, ومن أظهر ما لها من الشعائر. Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtiḍaʾ*, 207–8. English translation: Ibn Taymiyya, *Ibn Taymiya's Struggle*, 206–7.

2 وأما ما يتبع ذلك من التوسع فى العادات من الطام و اللباس, و اللعب و الراحة: فهو تابع لذلك العيد الدينى, كما أن ذلك تابع له فى دين الاسلام . . . كما يغير أهل البدع عادتهم فى الامور العادية, أو فى بعضها يصنعهم طعاما, أو زينة لباس, أو توسيع فى نفقة و نحو ذلك من غير أن يتعبدوا بتلك العادة المحدثة: كان هذا من أقبح المنكرات, فكذلك موافقة هؤلاء المغضوب عليهم و الضالين و أشد; Ibn Taymīya, *Kitāb iqtiḍaʾ*, 208, 209; *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 207.

3 Olesen, *Culte des Saints*, 16–17, 155.

4 Fierro, "The Treatises against Innovations"; Ukeles, "Innovation or Deviation," 96–98, 105–8, 111–12, 113–15, 153–69. On Ibn Taymiyya's dependence on al-Mālik (710–795 CE) see Olesen, *Culte des Saints*, 62, 127–28, 135, 144. On Mālikī concepts of *bidaʿ* see Ukeles, "Innovation or Deviation," 90–93.

another religion indicates accord with the belief system that those symbols represented, 2) participation in another religion's rituals remains a powerful indication of religious belonging, even when the practices consist of merriment divorced from strong religious associations, and 3) such ceremonies are fundamental in defining and distinguishing one religion from another, are all at the heart of this study. Many medieval writers would have agreed with him, although not all expressed the same disapprobation about the disintegration of religious boundaries.

Focusing on shared saints and festivals in medieval Mediterranean cultures, I maintain that pilgrimage and certain other types of religious festivals did, indeed, create a temporary liminal space in which communal religious boundaries dissolved or were redefined.[5] Many of the religious elite among Jews, Christians, and Muslims, however, devised highly polemical interpretations of these phenomena which served to highlight the superiority of their own faith, even while making the apparent sanction on the part of other faiths a key "proof" of this superiority. In medieval Europe, especially, Christian religious and civil leaders were not content with merely interpreting spontaneous shared rituals in ways that supported their claims, they created rituals in which Jews and, eventually, Muslims were *required* to participate in ways that emphasized their subjugated status relative to Christian power.[6] Akin to these were ritualized expressions of violence against Jews, which, on the one hand, made Jews unwitting and unwilling participants by virtue of being annual targets, but on the other, were intended to prevent Jews from exiting their homes to participate in or mock Christian celebration of Corpus Christi processions.[7] While holiday rituals of forced participation and violence are extreme examples of "shared" practices in the service of a particular religious agenda, similar to other instances of cross-religious practice, shared pilgrimages and festivals in the medieval Mediterranean also became realms of "competing discourses" in which individuals from various religious communities imposed their own goals, ideologies, and interpretations on the pilgrimage or festive experience.[8] These polemical interpre-

5 On this theory of pilgrimage generally see Turner, "Death and the Dead in the Pilgrimage Process," esp. 30; Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, 1–38, 180, 250–51. For its application to medieval saint veneration in Europe and the Middle East see Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 99–100; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 59–61, 77–79; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 122–23; Kramer, "A Jewish Cult of the Saints."

6 Ruiz, *Spanish Society*, 1348–1700, 139, 141, 165–166; Ruiz, *A King Travels*, 82, 104–7, 253, 273; Aron-Beller, "Buon Purim"; Linder, "The Jews Too Were Not Absent"; Coulet, "De l'integration à l'exclusion"; Muñoz Fernandez, "Fiestas laicas y fiestas profanas."

7 Nirenberg, *Neighboring Faiths*, 77–83, 110; Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 179–82, 198–230; Nirenberg, "Les juifs, la violence et le sacré"; Linder, "The Jews Too Were Not Absent"; Coulet, "De l'integration à l'exclusion"; Roth, "European Jewry in the Dark Ages"; Roth, "The Eastertide Stoning of the Jews."

8 Wheeler, "Models of Pilgrimage"; Eade, "Introduction," and John Eade and Michael Sallnow, "Introduction," in *Contesting the Sacred*, ix–xxx, 1–29; Eade, "Order and Power at Lourdes"; McKevitt, "San Giovanni Rotondo"; Bowman, "Christian Ideology"; Sallnow, "Pilgrimage and Cultural Fracture in the Andes"; Bilu, "The Inner Limits of Communitas"; Coleman, "Do You Believe in Pilgrimage?"; St. John, "Alternative Cultural Heterotopia"; Korom, "Caste Politics, Ritual, Performance"; Raj, "Transgressing Boundaries."

tations became integral to each group's theological understanding not merely of the religious other but of themselves. Thus, shared practices at pilgrimage sites and festivals in the medieval Mediterranean frequently enforced communal boundaries, even while giving the illusion of their disintegration. In this way shared pilgrimages and festivals were sources of normative and sometimes spontaneous *communitas* according to Victor Turner's formulation, while simultaneously inspiring a range of discourses that were essential to each group's self-definition and efforts to maintain or subvert the dominant status of the group holding political or religious power.[9]

Referring to competing claims about identity and martyrdom among late antique Jews and Christians, Daniel Boyarin has argued that "denials of sameness are precisely what we would expect in situations of difficult difference."[10] The denial, tension, and even anger shown by authors such as Ibn Taymiyya indicate that shared saints and festivals among medieval Jews, Christians, and Muslims were also very much "situations of difficult difference." By "difficult difference" I mean areas of difference or boundaries between communities which are the hardest to delineate, thus presenting the potentially threatening spectre of partially merged communities without clear hierarchies or recognitions of whose formulations of "truth" are correct.[11] Perhaps most threatening of all was not that the boundaries between religious communities might disappear to the point of creating a single community, but rather that similar rituals and beliefs practised together created individuals and customs who could not be comfortably categorized as belonging to one group or another. Instead, they remained poised in a liminal place of both belonging and non-belonging that served as an uncomfortable reminder of how fragile and porous such boundaries were. In other words, they were "hybrids," to use Homi Bhabha's term, and therefore simultaneously subversive, tension-producing, frightening in their indefinability, yet also the locus of intense cultural creativity.[12]

Willingness to join in another community's festivals or rituals or to ask the assistance of holy individuals outside one's own religious affiliation might be interpreted as a prelude to conversion. Certainly, Ibn Taymiyya seems to have thought such behaviour tantamount to conversion. Yet, I shall demonstrate that actual conversion, while desirable, often entailed a loss of power and theological significance. In hagiographic tales of encounters between Jews, Christians, and/or Muslims, patterns of conversion often reflect more about the relative religio-political dominance of the writer's own group

9 According to Turner the pilgrimage experience was defined by two competing forces: "social structure" and "anti-structure" or "*communitas*." The former were the normative rules of a given society, whereas the latter refers to a spontaneous and shared sense of belonging, even among people of different identities during pilgrimage. He further divided "*communitas*" into three types: 1) the spontaneous abandonment of quotidian restraints and hierarchies; 2) "normative *communitas*" in which the spontaneity of the first is partially captured and bound by rules; and 3) "ideological *communitas*" wherein the participants seek to establish a utopian society. Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, 250–52; Turner, "The Center out There"; Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 132; Olaveson, "Collective Effervescence and Communitas"; Wheeler, "Models of Pilgrimage."

10 Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 10.

11 This definition accords with that given by Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 10–11.

12 Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 2, 6–7, 176–79, 215–19, 224–29.

than about actual conversion. Likewise, certain shrines, mosques, churches, and synagogues attracted veneration from multiple communities and were treated as having special sanctity as a result. This shared veneration derived from the recollection of the holy building's status prior to Muslim or Christian conquerors' transformation of it into a mosque or church respectively. That members of the religious other had revered or continued to revere the space served both as proof of its sanctity and as a source of tension and counter-claims of dominance and "truth." Such jockeying on the part of multiple groups for spiritual "ownership" of a sacred space resembles similar competition for holy individuals. In both cases the veneration by members of various religious communities enhanced the status of each.

Chronology, Sources, and Organization

I have chosen the chronological span 1000–1650 as the focal centuries for this book because, although this period was formative, it has been relatively neglected in comparison to studies of shared festivals and saint veneration in the modern period. Beginning in the twelfth century contact between the Eastern and Western Mediterranean increased due to trade, crusading, pilgrimage, missionizing, and desire for intellectual exchange. As a result, not only were there more opportunities and recorded instances for such shared practices, but the tensions and hopes that such behaviour caused intensified and took on new meanings, especially in the light of the crusades, both those carried out in the Middle Ages and those attempted, feared, or planned during the late medieval and early modern period.

The sources lend themselves to this particular chronological span. The height of Syriac, Coptic, and later, Arabic-speaking Christian communities historiographic and hagiographic writing was from the third to the thirteenth centuries. These chronicles and compendia of the lives of important leaders in the churches provide essential windows into various Christian communities' festivals, religious rituals, and interactions with their Muslim conquerors, with other non-Christians, and with one another.[13] While much of the scholarship about Muslim–Christian interactions in the Middle East has focused on polemical treatises, debates, or have focused on the translation of important philosophical, literary, and medical material from Greek and Syriac into Arabic, texts such as the *Synaxaire Jacobite* are more useful for providing instances of shared veneration of saints or rituals in which Muslims and occasionally Jews participated.[14]

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13 Brockelmann, Finck, Leipoldt, and Littman, *Geschichte der christlichen Litteraturen des Orients*, 15–74, 133–83.

14 *Le Synaxaire arabe jacobite (rédaction copte)*. On Eastern Christian–Muslim religious, literary, historical, and philosophical exchanges see Brockelmann, Finck, Leipoldt, and Littman, *Geschichte*, 40–45, 1–62, 68–71; Becker, "Christian Polemic and the Formation of Islamic Dogma"; Bobzin, "A Treasury of Heresies"; Samir and Nielsen, *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the Abbasid Period*; Graf, "Christliche-arabische Texte"; Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow*, 45–128; Griffith, "Answers for the Shaykh," 7–19; Griffith, "Disputes with Muslims," 257–259; Griffith, "Faith and Reason in Christian Kalām"; Griffith, "'Amār al-Basri's *Kitāb al-burhān*"; Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*; LeCoz, *Les médecins nestoriens*; Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs*; Putman, *L'église et l'islam*; Reinink,

Sunni Muslim authors following the Mālikī legal school in al-Andalus and the Maghrib began composing books dedicated entirely to the identification and refutation of *bida'*. The first of these was written in 900 CE. The majority, however, were written between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries CE.[15] Authors from the other legal schools also composed *bida'* treatises, the most famous of these being Ibn Taymiyya. The greater number were Mālikī, some of whom, such as al-Ṭurṭūshī (c. 1060–1126 CE) and Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 1336 CE), brought their ideas from al-Andalus and the Maghrib to Egypt and the surrounding regions as they themselves emigrated east.[16] Not only did Sunni objectors to shared practices travel eastward from the western Mediterranean, so too did the Shi'i followers of the Fatimids, and Sufis and their adherents, such as Aḥmad al-Badawī (1200–1276 CE) and his family. Both the Fatimids and many Sufis, those originating from the Maghrib and those native to the Levant and Egypt encouraged some of the practices against which the Mālikī legalists, and others who followed their example, fought in their anti-*bida'* treatises.[17] These anti-*bida'* and related genres such as *ḥisba* and *fatāwā* (lists of laws and letters or declarations in response to legal questions, respectively) collections are important both for their detailed descriptions of shared rituals and what they tell us about the attitude toward these customs on the part of many of the Muslim religious leaders. Focusing on the period that gave birth to these types of texts seems essential to understanding the phenomenon as a whole. Furthermore, this migration of both those who engaged in shared practices and those who objected to them is also important for understanding the commonalities and lines of influence between different parts of the Mediterranean.

The legal writing of the Western Church also transformed during this period. While church councils and law codes were established genres in both the Western and Eastern churches, beginning in the mid-twelfth century Catholic clerics interested in law, beginning with Gratian, began to systematize and reconcile previous rulings so that canon (i.e. church) law became a full branch of legal studies. By the thirteenth century canon lawyers turned their attention to the status of non-Christians under Christian rule.[18] Beginning with the encounters with the Mongols, and later, with the Chinese, various African

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"The Beginnings of Syriac Apologetic Literature"; Thomas, *Early Muslim Polemic*; Troupeau, "Le role des Syriaques." This is a small selection of the scholarship available.

15 The first of these was Ibn Waḍḍāh, *Kitāb al-bida'*. See Fierro, "The Treatises against Innovations"; Ukeles, "Innovation or Deviation."

16 Fierro, "The Treatises against Innovations"; Cuffel, "From Practice to Polemic"; Frenkel, "Muslim Pilgrimage."

17 Urvoy, "Aspects de l'hagiographie musulmane"; Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo*, 12–22; Williams, "The Cult of the 'Alid." Aḥmad al-Badawī, who spent most of his life in Egypt, became one of the most popular Sufi figures there. The festivities surrounding his *mawlid* (birth/death day) became especially well known for objectionable practices. See Ukeles, "Innovation or Deviation," 200–38; Urvoy, "Aspects de l'hagiographie musulmane" and Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo*. Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen points out, however, that the earliest accounts of Aḥmad al-Badawī do not include a Maghribi origin. Mayeur-Jaouen, *Histoire*.

18 Champagne and Resnick, *Jews and Muslims under the Fourth Lateran Council*; Kedar, "De iudeis et sarracenis"; Pakter, *Medieval Canon Law and the Jews*; Synan, *The Popes and the Jews*.

polities, and peoples of the New World, they also debated the status of non-Christians outside Catholic rule. The status of non-Catholic Christians such as the Copts, whom the Europeans encountered during the course of the crusades, also captured the attention of canon lawyers.[19] While these Catholic sources are not as fulsome about shared practices as Muslim ones, nevertheless, they also provide descriptions and objections by religious leaders to such customs.

For canon law collections from the Western and Eastern Christians alike, the repetition of older laws from previous collections complicate efforts to use this genre as the basis for reconstructing social and religious history.[20] Yet, while many laws had long existed and were repeated from one collection to another, their interpretation and the degree to which they were imposed varied considerably depending on time and place.[21] To cite one example, Ana Echevarria has demonstrated that the eleventh century Mozarabic collection of canon laws, adapted from older Visigothic law, modified and rearranged materials from previous councils, and manipulated category designations of heresy or religious alterity to answer the needs of a Christian community now under Muslim rule and in close proximity and interaction with a Jewish community to whom some of its members were attracted.[22] Despite the tendency to repeat older sources, legal texts must be seen as dynamic texts, frequently customized to suit the needs of those living during the period in which they were composed.

Scholars examining the development of Christian and Jewish legal codes and practices in Muslim-ruled lands have emphasized their engagement with Muslim law, either directly, or often through unacknowledged influence and accommodation.[23] Within the Mizraḥi and Sephardi communities, legal thinkers developed com-

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19 Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers and Infidels*.

20 Hartmann and Pennington, *History of Byzantine Canon and Eastern Canon Law*; Linder, *Jews in the Legal Sources*, 16–17; Linder, "The Legal Status of the Jews "; Bowman, *The Jews of Byzantium*, 31.

21 Consider, for example, the vicissitudes of Jews in the kingdom of France, where at times they lived peacefully and profitably under French rule, and at others were subjected to stronger taxation, restrictions, or even expulsion, depending upon the ruler at a given period, and the political, economic, and social situation of the kingdom; see Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews*. The enforcement of *dhimmi* law also varied widely in Muslim lands as well. For example, in Muslim Iberia, Janin Safran has shown that the text and application of the Pact of Umar was far from uniform; Safran, *Defining Boundaries*, 15–17, 19. Likewise, in al-Andalus, the prohibition against allowing *dhimmi* to be in positions of political power had largely been ignored, especially in regard to the Jews, however, when Joseph, the son of the Jewish vizir, Samuel ha-Nagid, was seen to have overstepped the loosely applied bounds of Muslim–Jewish hierarchy, these laws were invoked with much greater harshness. Nor did his father completely escape censure from some Muslims; Brann, *Power in the Portrayal*, 14–15, 22–23, 27, 48–52, 89, 101–18; Ashtor, *The Jews of Moslem Spain*, 2:68–116, 122–24, 158–89. Once the Almoravids came to power, they enforced restrictions on *dhimmi* dress, professions, and behavior more stringently than the Umayyad or other Muslim rulers had before them. See García-Sanjuán, "Jews and Christians in Almoravid Seville."

22 Echevarria, "Los Marcos Legales." More generally, compare with Amnon Linder's remarks in *Jews in the Legal Sources*, 16–17.

23 Weitz, *Between Christ and Caliph*; Fishman, *Becoming the People of the Talmud*, 34–35,51, 57–58, 83–84, 223–24; Simonsohn, *A Common Justice*; Johannes V. bar Abgārē, *Syrische Texte zum*

pendia of laws, the most famous of these, being the *Mishnah Torah* by the philosopher and community leader Moses b. Maimon (Maimonides) (1138–1204). These collections brought together Talmudic law in a condensed and interpreted form. This effort began, in part, as an endeavour by the Gaonim, the leaders of the Talmudic academies in Pumbedita and Sura during the height of the Abbasid caliphate, to make Talmudic law more understandable, but also to prevent the undirected and capricious application of laws from the Talmud, regardless of local custom and contemporary oral teachings.[24] The close scholarly exchange and competition between thinkers in Babylonia, Qayrawan, al-Andalus, and, later, Egypt, did much to shape this genre.[25] In turn, these connections between the Western and Eastern Mediterranean and West Asia mirror the transfer of ideas and persons among Muslims in the same regions.[26] Unlike their Muslim counterparts discussed above, Jewish legal thinkers were not notably preoccupied with the problem of shared festivals or practices, although Jewish law codes, like those of Christians, do sketch the boundaries and shape of exchanges with non-Jews, according to a given author's concerns. Furthermore, when considering Sephardi and Mizraḥi legal attitudes and forms of piety from the thirteenth century onwards, the influence of the Ashkenazim and Jews of Southern France needs to be taken into account. Jews from Northern Europe emigrated in substantial numbers with their families to the Holy Land and to Egypt. Many of these became teachers and law-givers, despite language barriers.[27] Scholars from France and German-speaking lands were encouraged to settle and take up posts in Sepharad, and their biblical commentaries and study of the Talmud were much admired by many of their co-religionists in Iberia.[28]

In addition to legal commentaries and codes which shed light on Jewish attitudes toward shared practices, pilgrimage, and the "very special dead," a substantial body of *responsa* exist both from Western Europe and from the Middle East courtesy of the Cairo Geniza.[29] *Responsa*, which are Jewish legal responses to queries about some

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islamischen Recht: Das Rechtsbuch, 31–35, 44–45, 57–59, 73, 83–84, 87; Stroumsa, *Maimonides in his World*, 45–52, 61, 65–70; Kramer, "Influence of Islamic Law on Maimonides"; Libson, "Parallels between Maimonides and Islamic Law"; Libson, "Interaction between Islamic Law and Jewish Law."

24 Fishman, *Becoming the People of the Talmud*, 20–90.

25 Fishman, *Becoming the People of the Talmud*, 65–90.

26 For Jews from al-Andalus and the Maghrib coming to settle in Egypt and Palestine, see Cuffel, "Call and Response"; Gil, *A History of Palestine*, 527, 612–15; Gil, *Ereẓ-Yisra'el*, 3:3–4, 92, 258, 465. For travel because of trade (both Muslim and Jewish), see: Constable, *Trade and Traders*. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Ashtor notes that there was a substantial number of Jews coming from Iran and Iraq as well. See Ashtor, "Un movement migratoire."

27 Cuffel, "Call and Response"; Kanarfogel, "The *'Aliyah* of the Three Hundred Rabbis"; Prawer, *The History of the Jews of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 149–54; Goitein, *Ha-Yishuv be-Ereẓ-Yisra'el*, 41, 338–43.

28 Gampel, "A Letter to a Wayward Teacher."

29 Peter Brown uses the term "very special dead" to refer to Christian martyrs in late antiquity "for whom mourning was unthinkable" (71) who became a focus of requests for intercession on the part of the living and whose bodies and graves were exempt from the usual deterioration. Brown,

issue within Jewish law, parallel the Muslim *fatāwā*. Together they provide essential windows into daily concerns and practices of members of the communities which produced them. Particularly significant, however, are the letters, legal or otherwise, religious tracts, and poems from the Cairo Geniza which reveal much about Jewish festivals, pilgrimage, attitudes toward the dead, joint intercession, and interest in Sufism. The period of coverage, therefore, contains the most extensive Geniza material uncovered so far.

Starting in the twelfth century Christians, Jews, and Muslims alike began to provide more personalized accounts of their travels and, most importantly, to describe and interpret the customs of the people they encountered, far more than had been true during the early Middle Ages. Thus pilgrimage narratives and chronicles are both more detailed and more numerous during this later period. Descriptions of religious practices grew increasingly detailed in these narratives until the seventeenth century when focus shifted to primarily scientific and political concerns.[30] The accounts by pilgrims also become more individualistic, bridging the genres of chronicle, travel narrative, and autobiography.[31]

The fifteenth through the sixteenth centuries constituted a period of substantial change in Europe, Byzantium, and the Middle East. European expansion into Asia, Africa, and the New World began during this period, while in 1453 Ottomans conquered Constantinople and in 1517 took Egypt from the Mamluks. The resulting increase in curiosity and travel between the Middle East and Europe along with the sense of crisis inspired by these changes and continued anxiety about the plague prompted a very rich body of literature: travellers' texts, chronicles, hagiographies, and autobiographies, some of which detail the practices under consideration to a far greater degree than earlier material.[32]

The Cult of the Saints, 69–85. In the context of Muslims and Jews, I use this term to indicate who were set apart as a focus of reverence and solicitations for intercessions.

30 Weber, *Traveling through Text*; Schein, "From 'Holy Geography' to 'Ethnography'"; Graboïs, "La 'Découvert' du monde musulman"; Graboïs, "Islam and Muslims"; Graboïs, "Medieval Pilgrims"; Prawer, *The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 169–250.

31 Lewis, "First-Person Narrative"; Amelang, *The Flight of Icarus*, 36–39; Idel and Lipner's introduction to Aescoly, ed., *Sipur David ha-Reuveni*, 210–14. On the "rise of the individual" and autobiography in the Middle Ages generally see Rosenthal, "Die Arabische Autobiographie"; Reynolds, *Interpreting the Self*; Bynum, "Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?"; and Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual 1050–1200*.

32 The political changes are only one factor in the changing nature of the sources. Other factors have to do with the invention of printing, the availability of cheap paper, increased level of learning at many levels of the populace, and the greater value placed on individual experience and observation. These trends begin around the sixteenth century and continue throughout the early modern period. Amelang, *Flight of Icarus*; Foisil, "The Literature of Intimacy"; Mascuch, *Origins of the Individualist Self*, 55–131; Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution*, 56–58; Carlebach, *Divided Souls*, 88–123; Davis, "Fame and Secrecy," 50–70; Roth, *The Jews in the Renaissance*, 310–11; Schacter, "History and Memory of Self"; Shulvass, *The Jews in the World of the Renaissance*, 289–305; Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 62–63; Lewis, "First-Person Narrative"; Reynolds, *Interpreting the Self*; Kafadar, "Self and Others"; Hanna, *In Praise of Books*.

Chronicles, legal records, and descriptions of royal and other types of processions increased in detail from the fourteenth century onwards. As such, they provide valuable, often detailed accounts of forcibly shared festivals, although, as Teofilio Ruiz warns, they may not be accepted at face value.[33]

Another set of Iberian sources arise during the later Middle Ages and early modern period dealing with Christian, Jewish, and Muslim relations, namely inquisitorial documents describing the prosecution of individuals who had been Jewish or Muslim or were of Jewish or Muslim ancestry. These persons putatively had converted to Christianity, yet were engaging in "Jewish" or "Muslim" practices despite their conversion. While these sources might seem ripe for finding instances of "shared" practices, the phenomenon that they reflect is fundamentally different from the one being studied here. I am examining individuals or groups who had a clear, freely expressed religious affiliation but who chose to join the ceremonies or consult the "saints" of another group while retaining their original religious affiliation. *Conversos* were not at liberty to return to their original faith while they were in Europe, therefore any "mixed" practices in which they engaged often reflected an attempt to follow their original religion clandestinely while at the same time appeasing the Christian authorities with an outward adherence to Catholicism. Because of the compulsion involved and need to hide non-Christian behaviour, the shared religious practices of *conversos* will remain largely outside the purview of this project.

The migration of Muslims and Jews prompted by the conquest of Granada (the last Muslim stronghold in Iberia) and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, both in 1492, plays a significant role in this examination, however. At the end of the fifteenth century many Muslim and Jewish exiles from Iberia resettled in Muslim lands. This emigration from Europe and from within the Islamic world of Jews, *conversos* (those who had been Jews and converted to Christianity or descendants of Jewish converts) who returned to their ancestral religion, Muslims, and *moriscos* (those who had been Muslim and converted to Christianity, or descendants of Muslim converts) continued into the early modern period, creating new blends and interpretations of shared religious practices. In particular, Jews established spiritual centres such as that of the Lurianic kabbalists (Jewish mystics) in Safed, Palestine, and created new combinations and meanings of shared religious practices.[34] Lurianic kabbalists not only invested new layers of meaning into intercessory prayer at holy gravesites, but their autobiographies, chronicles, and travel guides composed at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries indicate that they regularly consulted and criticized Muslim shaykhs for their prophetic and healing abilities. Venerating and even uniting with the special

33 Ruiz, *Spanish Society*, 1348–1700, 133, 136, 141–52, 163; Ruiz, *A King Travels*, 49–63; Muñoz Fernandez, "Fiestas laicas y fiestas profanas."

34 David, "Safed"; David, "Demographic Changes"; David, "The Spanish Exiles"; David, *To Come to the Land*; Fine, *Physician of the Soul*. Some of the Lurianic sources were written in the seventeenth century although they contain considerable information about the sixteenth century and the authors themselves bridge the two centuries. On Muslim migration see Frenkel, "Muslim Pilgrimage"; Lewis, "Maghribis in Jerusalem," 144–46; Abdel Raḥim, "Al-Moriscos' settlement."

dead was a key tenant of Lurianic kabbalah, and some of the rituals and beliefs seem to have been influenced by Sufi practices.[35] At this point we also see the first pilgrimage guides written for Jewish women.[36]

Given these medieval and early modern developments, 1000–1650 was clearly an exceptionally formative and exciting period in the history of shared religious practice. It provides an abundance of sources, which increase in number and detail toward the end of the chosen timeframe. Insofar as possible, I pay careful attention to the ways in which the shared religious practices and their interpretations change over time and from region to region. Each of these genres is fraught with its own limitations and the biases of the authors. However, by drawing writings from all the communities involved and allowing them to counterbalance one another we can piece together the practices themselves as well as the meanings that these authors assigned to them. The book is divided into six, roughly thematic chapters besides the introduction and conclusion. Chapter 1, "Holy Spaces and Holy Corpses: Defining Sanctity and Veneration of the Dead from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages," lays the groundwork for symbols and practices that became a part of the common "religious vocabulary" of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Chapter 2, "The Other as Witness to the Truth," focuses on European Jewish and Christian interpretations of the presence and participation of members of other faiths in festivals or at holy places, primarily in the Middle East, suggesting that each saw the presence of the other as affirming the truth and power of the festival, site, or grave, so that the other became a witness to the "truth" of Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. Chapter 3, "Forceful Saints and Compelling Rituals: Real and Imagined Jewish and Muslim Participation in Christian Rituals and Saint Cults from Byzantium to Western Europe," examines Western European Christian hagiographies, focusing particularly on the figures of St. Nicholas and St. Isidore, in which Jews or Muslims were compelled to honour a saint for fear of punishment, and then turns to evidence of Jews and Muslims being forced to donate to Christian religious foundations and to participate in Christian processions and festivals, including ritual humiliations and violence. I argue that these were a way of enacting religious hierarchy in a very public way, and of appropriating what Christians found appealing from Muslim and Jewish culture. This chapter also analyzes Jewish interpretations and resistance to such forced participation. Eventually Jews and Muslims came to be such an integral part of Christian festivals, especially in Iberia, that once there were no "real" Jews or Muslims available, Christian actors took their parts. In Chapter 4, "Praising, Cursing, or Ignoring the Other: Jews, Christians, and Muslims at One Another's holy spaces in the Islamicate Mediterranean," I begin by analyzing Coptic Christian and Eastern

35 Fenton, "Influences soufies"; Fenton, "La 'hitbodetut'"; Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 274–75. Jews from both Europe and the Middle East had long been engaging in some of these practices, prior to the Lurianic movement. See Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 5:180–85; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 59–119; Giller, "Recovering the Sanctity of the Galilee"; Cuffel, "From Practice to Polemic"; Cuffel, "Between Reverence and Fear"; Horowitz, "Speaking to the Dead"; Shoham-Steiner, "For a Prayer in the Place Would Be Most Welcome."

36 Ilan, Graves of the Righteous, 36–37, 46–47.

and Western Syriac Christian communities and Eastern Jewish communities. I show that the legal traditions of both create space for the participation of religious outsiders in terms of donations to churches and the reception of charity. Both, like their Western counterparts, rejoiced in the participation of Muslims and recounted tales in which recalcitrant Muslims were punished by the Jewish and Christian holy dead, thus establishing the correct religious hierarchy in ways that the living could not. Muslims, however, often either do not mention, or even attempt to disguise, the presence of non-Muslims at holy places. Muslim travelogues contain accounts of Muslims visiting churches and monasteries but suggest that they do so out of curiosity rather than religious reasons, and typically curse the fact that a beautiful building or important site is not in Muslim hands. The few extensive discussions of Christians at Muslim sites are from the period of the crusades. In those instances Muslim authors use the occasion to polemicize against Christians and depict their humiliation. The next chapter, "Opposition to Shared Saints and Festivals in the Islamicate World," deals with legal opposition to what, in the Islamic world, was termed *bida'*, "innovation" to correct religious practice. On the one hand this literature provides extensive accounts of shared practices, even to the point of Muslims participating in the eucharist ceremony, however, religious leaders condemned mixed practices as a violation of religious hierarchy. Many theologians also asserted that participating in the festivals and practices of the religious other, was tantamount to endorsing those religions and becoming (like) one of them. Yet religious leaders of Jews, Christians, and Muslims of Egypt, the Levant, North Africa, and al-Andalus alike, all found themselves obliged to argue against participating in other groups' festivals, travelling to the graves of "outsiders" saints, or encouraging members of other religious communities to join in celebrations or pilgrimage. The final chapter, "Upholding the Dignity of the Faith and Separating Believers and Unbelievers in Medieval Christian Societies," turns to objections to shared practices expressed by religious leaders in Christian-ruled lands. European Byzantine and Armenian Christians frequently protested the participation of Muslims and Jews in their religious ceremonies or their presence in churches or other holy buildings. Some indication in Byzantine sources exists that Muslims came to Christian sites, but generally that was condemned, often as a failing of the emperor. Christians (such as the Armenians) were condemned for adopting "Jewish-like" practices. In Western Europe we see evidence of a conflict between local, usually secular authorities who wished to include Muslims and Jews in processions and other religious rituals, and representatives of the papacy or the higher church hierarchy who wished to abolish such customs as undignified and polluting. Some of these protests were also designed to protect Jews against ritualized violence. This conflict also seems to have affected dramatic representations of Jews and Muslims and descriptions of them, so that even when they were not participating, their "bad" behaviour remained a topos in Christian literature and law.

Methodological Issues

The subject matter and geographic scope raise a number of methodological problems. The adoption of others' religious practices and combining them with one's own might be dubbed "syncretism," a term which has long had negative connotations.[37] Recently, however, scholars have begun to rehabilitate syncretism as a useful analytic category which is relevant to the material examined here. Shared religious practices have often been designated by historians as "popular" religion among Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the medieval Mediterranean. Yet defining "popular religion," or "saint" especially in the context of medieval Muslim and Jewish veneration of the "special dead," has been a source of debate by scholars. Even the terms "Mediterranean" and "medieval" have become subject to dispute. The remainder of my introduction shall be dedicated to clarifying these issues.

Both criticisms and arguments in favour of the heuristic value of the concept of syncretism have tended to focus around issues of missionizing, specifically Christianization, colonization, and resistance, hegemony, race, agency, globalization, and how syncretism may or may not be distinguished from hybridization, creolization, and bricolage. Many of these broad theoretical debates have focused around modern religious case studies and contexts.[38] David Frankfurter, however, in his reformulation and application of the concept of syncretism to processes of religious encounter and adaptation in late antique Egypt, has demonstrated the potential of these discussions to push toward a reevaluation of the dynamics between pre-modern religions. Like many recent researchers dealing with syncretism in modern eras, Frankfurter emphasizes that one should not think of syncretism as a merging of theological systems, or as a reversion to a kind of partial affiliation with the dominant (politically empowered) religion, in this case, Christianity. Rather, he argues, it is an "assemblage of symbols and discourses" which result from "cultures' inevitable projects of interpreting and assimilating new religious discourses… us[ing] traditional imagery and landscape to articulate a new religious identity."[39] He warns however, that these processes are neither fixed nor harmonious.[40] His book does much to highlight the simultaneous continuation, adaptation, and contestation of originally non-Christian beliefs and rituals as Christianity gradually took root in Egypt. Nevertheless, because he is looking at the Christianization process, i.e. the shift of one or more sets of religious systems which had been dominant, or at least prevalent to another, he seems to assume that syncretism is part of a transformative process. By the period covered within the current book, however, various forms of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam were well established in both the Eastern and Western Mediterranean lands. Jewish, Christian, or Muslim adoption of the religious practices, holy places, or

37 For a historiographic summary of these debates see Kane, *Syncretism and Christian Tradition*, 1–134; Shaw and Stewart, *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism*, 1–24.

38 Kane, *Syncretism and Christian Tradition*; Leopold and Jensen, *Syncretism in Religion*; Shaw and Stewart, *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism*.

39 Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt*, 16–17.

40 Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt*, 17.

people of another group cannot easily be ascribed to "assimilating new religious discourses." Rather the "syncretism" of the medieval Mediterranean, while very much an "assemblage (and application) of symbols and discourses" from multiple origins, was also an integral, long-standing aspect of religious dynamics between Jews, Christians, and Muslims, and *not* a transitional stage in their early development. Helpful here is the insistence by Anita Leopold and Jeppe Jensen that syncretism does not mean that people are confused and unable to distinguish between religions.[41] Drawing from cognitive psychology, they argue that people adopt and mix religious elements based on "inference systems" whereby an element is selected because it fits within a particular extant, understandable religious or cultural category. These elements may in turn change and reshape their new context.[42] Yet in a milieu where the religious communities in question were constantly interacting, concurrent or shared practices were themselves part of an ongoing context, in part, I suggest, because all of the communities had a shared vocabulary of symbols which made elements of the others' religion eminently portable.

Both Aron Gurevich and Peter Burke, examining popular culture in medieval and early modern Europe respectively, have argued against neat dichotomies of elite versus non-elite and against any notion that "popular culture" was merely a misinterpretation or distortion from aspects of elite culture. Instead, they have demonstrated that lords, peasants, and clerics alike regularly participated in festivals together, venerated and feared saints in a similar fashion, and had a common symbolic or theological vocabulary from which they drew.[43] The authors focusing specifically on popular religion also have eschewed clear divisions between formal or "high" versus "popular" religion.[44] Some researchers such as Valerie Flint have examined the ways in which Christian leaders sought to co-opt, transform, and ultimately supplant other beliefs while at the same time demonstrating the degree to which Christianity itself was transformed by these encounters.[45] Karen Jolly and others have further emphasized that the process of accommodation between formal Christianity and seemingly non-Christian beliefs and practices was one of *mutual* influence at all levels of Christian society.[46] While recognizing the possibility of distinguishing between "popular" and "formal" religion, Jolly defines popular religion as the "religious beliefs and practices of the whole community," on the assumption

41 Which is not to say that medieval authors did not occasionally argue that this was precisely what was "wrong" with those who adopted religious practices that a given author considered to be foreign.

42 Leopold and Jensen, *Syncretism in religion*, 8–9.

43 Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*; Burke, *Popular Culture*, 23–29, 58–64.

44 Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture,* 39–103, 153–75; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*; Van Engen, "The Christian Middle Ages as an Historiographical Problem"; Flint, *The Rise of Magic*; Ruggiero, *Binding Passions*; Jolly, *Popular Religion*. Jolly's entire book is a good example of this trend; for an excellent historiographic overview, see her introduction, 12–18.

45 See, for example, her discussion of Christian appropriation of weather magic. Flint, *The Rise of Magic*, 173–93.

46 Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 16–34, 71–103, 116–68; Schmitt, "Les traditions folkloriques"; Schmitt, "'Religion populaire' et culture folklorique"; Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 1–17, 56–94.

that the elite share many of the beliefs and rituals with other members of the culture. Formal religion, to Jolly, seems to be the views and doctrines established by an educated minority whose occupation it is to examine doctrinal questions. Yet Jolly argues that popular and formal religion "have a symbiotic relationship within a shared culture, each actively engaged with the other."[47]

Jolly made these observations while analyzing elf charms in Saxon culture, however, they are readily transferable to the study of popular religion in other regions and periods. Indeed, scholars of the pre-modern Middle East have begun to apply many of the approaches that have long been common in the study of the western Middle Ages. Boaz Shoshan has examined festivals in medieval Cairo in light of methodologies used to interpret festivals and carnivals in medieval and early modern Europe.[48] Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, in her study of Coptic and Muslim pilgrimage, like Jolly, defines popular religion as the "religion of everyone," and argues vehemently against seeing these practices in any way as marginal or derivative.[49]

These scholars' insistence that elite and non-elite cannot be easily separated and that the culture and religious practices of all socio-economic and educational levels of society are either the same or in constant dialogue with one another is essential for any nuanced understanding of shared religious practices in the medieval Mediterranean. Any attempt to categorize this phenomenon neatly as the religion of the uneducated or to identify opposition to these customs as "elite" is immediately troubled by exceptions. I have already noted that Ibn Taymiyya, who railed against "popular religion," encountered strong opposition both from emirs and the *'ulama*, i.e the religious leadership. Taking another example from the Islamic world, individuals such as the historian 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad 'Ulaymī (c. 1456–1521 CE) or the traveller Ibn Baṭūṭa (1304–1377 CE) were both well educated yet both made a pilgrimage to Hebron without finding this behaviour either unusual or objectionable.[50] As I will show throughout this book, members of the religious and political elite of all of the communities at times sponsored and even joined with the population at large in these shared celebrations, and at other times condemned them. Sometimes support and condemnation came from the same official at different times, for while visiting the graves of the righteous or joining festivals was a subject of religious debate, it was also very much an issue of intercommunal hierarchy.

In light of how the subject has been treated in the past, defining "popular religion" is also particularly important when examining shared veneration of saints, shrines, or festivals in the Middle East and in medieval Jewish culture in Europe. Earlier generations of Islamicists designated *ziyāra* and supernumerary or extra-quranic festivals as forms of "popular religion." Frequently this appellation was a way of categorizing these practices as contrary to Islamic law and to the "spirit of Islam." Some scholars, following the lead

47 Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 19

48 Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo*.

49 Mayeur-Jaouen, *Pèlerinages d'Egypte*, 24–25.

50 'Ulaymī, *Uns al-jalīl bi-tārīkh al-Quds*, 2:62; Ibn Baṭūṭa, *Voyages*, 1:232.

of their male-authored sources, also have suggested that women and those who were only superficially converted were the primary practitioners of these "superstitions" and rituals borrowed from Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, or pre-Islamic religious beliefs in Arabia, North Africa, or Central Asia. Furthermore, the earliest studies tended to be descriptive rather than analytical, paying minimal attention to saints' chronologies or change over time. Recent scholars have tried to be more analytical and nuanced and have pointed out the inherently polemical agenda present in many medieval and early modern authors.[51] Much of the current scholarship on festivals and the veneration of saints in the Islamic world continues to focus on the legal debates surrounding them, in part because some of our best source material comes from treatises addressing the legality of *bida'*, meaning innovation.[52] Some Judaicists have similarly concentrated on the legal history of requesting intercession from the dead, although most have turned their attention to the cultural or mystical aspects of this practice within Judaism and its interconnections with practices of surrounding cultures.[53] A few, such as Robert Cohn, have maintained that veneration of saints in medieval Judaism was a peripheral phenomenon peculiar to mystical movements, since such acts violated basic tenets of Judaism such as the worship of only one God and the impurity of corpses.[54] His arguments resemble those of early scholars dealing with similar issues in Islam. Contrary to Cohn and the hypotheses of early Islamicists, the work of Christopher Taylor and Josef Meri

51 Bousquet, "Le ritual du culte des saints"; Goldziher, "Veneration of the Saints in Islam"; Grunebaum, *Muhammadan Festivals*, 25–28, 34–36, 51–56, 62–65, 67–68, 73–94; Montet, "Le Culte des saints"; Castagné, "Le Culte des lieux saints"; Memon's introduction to *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*. Geibels, "Sufism and the Veneration of Saints"; Shahīd, "The Islamic Pilgrimage." Also see Jacques Waardenburg's critique of scholars' treatment of "popular" and "official" Islam: Waardenburg, "Popular and Official Islam." Not all of these authors posit pre-Islamic origins to these practices in order to criticize them. On the problems of designating these practices as "women's religion" see Mernissi, "Women, Saints and Sanctuaries"; Dhaouadi, "Femmes dans les Zaouias"; Bartels, "The Two faces of Saints"; Lutfi, "Manners and Customs"; Hoffman, "Muslim Sainthood"; Cuffel, "From Practice to Polemic." Elliot Horowitz has also noted that Jewish leaders in Europe often targeted women as responsible for improper or "unjewish" practices at gravesites. Horowitz, "Speaking to the Dead."

52 Granja, "Fiestas cristianas en al-Andalus (Materiales para su estudio) I"; Granja, "Fiestas cristianas en al-Andalus (Materiales para su estudio) II"; *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*; Lutfi, "Manners and Customs"; Olesen, *Culte des saints*; Fierro, "The Treatises against Innovations"; Fierro's introduction to al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-ḥawādith wa-al-bida' = El libro de las novedades y las innovaciones*; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 168–218; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 125–41; Ukeles, "Innovation or Deviation."

53 For those focusing on aspects of the legal history see Horowitz, "Speaking to the Dead"; Cohn, "Sainthood on the Periphery,". For those dealing with the cultural and mystical see Boustan, "Jewish Veneration of the 'Special Dead'"; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 5:180–85; Reiner, "'Aliyah ve- 'Aliyah"; Giller, "Recovering the Sanctity of the Galilee"; Fenton, "Influences soufies" Fenton, "La 'hitbodetut'," Ilan, Graves of the Righteous; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 214–50; Cuffel, "Call and Response"; Cuffel, "From Practice to Polemic"; Cuffel, "Between Reverence and Fear"; Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 259–358; Weber, "Sharing the Sites"; Shoham-Steiner, "Jews and Healing"; Shoham-Steiner, "For a Prayer in the Place Would Be Most Welcome."

54 Cohn, "Sainthood on the Periphery."

have demonstrated that these practices were widespread among medieval Muslims and Jews at all levels of society.[55]

Scholars of the medieval Mediterranean have tended to focus on a single religious tradition when examining "popular religion" and the veneration of saints; often the latter has been treated as a subdivision of the former, especially when dealing with Islam.[56] More comparative approaches within a medieval or early modern context include F. W. Hasluck, Josef Meri, and Catherine Mayeur Jaouen, though even these have turned their attention to two rather than all three major religious groupings in the Mediterranean.[57] Peregrine Horden, Nicolas Purcell, and Angelos Chaniotis take a slightly different approach, examining the question of whether a single "Mediterranean" religious culture existed. They all note the tendency of earlier scholarship to focus on the origins of certain beliefs and rituals, moving backwards chronologically from Islam to Christianity and Judaism and to various Pagan cults.[58] They point out, however, that not all sites have been venerated by all groups, and that some places have fallen out of favour only to be revived later.[59] Even when there is continuity of locale or practice, David Frankfurter has emphasized the shifting meanings of rituals and practices as their religious contexts change.[60] James Grehan has taken a slightly different approach in his study of religious practices in Ottoman Syria and Palestine. He argues shared veneration of holy trees, caves, springs and other sites constitute a kind of agrarian religion focusing on basic needs of everyday existence. Such cultic sites and the rituals and associations with healing and weather control connected to them supersede religious leaders' impulses to demarcate according to theological differences, both in age and practical functionality. He attributes the spread of this agrarian religion into urban environments to migration.[61] More significant, therefore, than uncovering continuity or "survivals" is to recognize the shifting meanings that the various groups attributed to the rituals, holy sites, topographical features and the figures connected to them and to recognize the degrees to which Mediterranean religious cultures and practices influenced one another, over both long and short distances. The economic, cultural, environmental, and specific religious contexts for a given cult are more essential to comprehending it than its origins.[62]

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55 Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*. Taylor deals only with the Islamic world.

56 Bousquet, "Le ritual du culte des saints"; Goldziher, "Veneration of the Saints in Islam"; Grunebaum, *Muhammadan Festivals*, 67–84; Lutfi, "Manners and Customs"; Sturm, "The Arab Geographer al-Muqaddasi"; Winter, "Popular Religion in Egypt"; Langner, *Untersuchungen*; Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo*.

57 Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam*; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*; Mayeur-Jaouen, *Pèlerinages d'Egypte*.

58 Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 404–11, 422–23; Chaniotis, "Ritual Dynamics."

59 Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 440, 446; Chaniotis, "Ritual Dynamics."

60 Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 32–36, 42–46, 145–256.

61 Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 1–60. Compare with Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, where healing and environmental factors are a frequent commonality among religious traditions and locales that endure (albeit often transformed) despite changes in official religious ideology.

62 Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 422–23, 436–38, 442–60; Chaniotis, "Ritual Dynamics."

In this study, while acknowledging that many of the practices or holy sites have roots in much earlier periods, I do not intend to trace their "genealogies" except in so far as they affect the interpretations assigned to shared holy areas and festivals by various medieval Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities. What interests me are the layers of simultaneous and often conflicting meanings that sharing holy space and ritual engendered. Underlying this approach, however, is the implicit assumption that the regions surrounding the Mediterranean Sea constituted a cultural unit or set of closely interrelated cultural units which transcended political and religious boundaries and should be studied together in the medieval and early modern periods. I do not thereby contend that all cultures in the Mediterranean regions were identical or lacked periodization or development peculiar to them.[63] Rather, I maintain that they were sufficiently connected that our understanding of any one of them would be enhanced by placing it in relationship to the others.

The "Mediterranean" has increasingly become a subfield within a variety of disciplines such as history or anthropology, and "Mediterranean Studies," which has become an interdisciplinary field unto itself.[64] The methodological foundations and areas of inquiry for the Mediterranean region were largely established by Braudel in his two-volume *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*.[65] Not all scholars have accepted Braudel's conceptualization of the Mediterranean as a coherent geographic and historical region.[66] Those who have, as Horden and Purcell point out, have either over-emphasized economics and trade above other kinds of cultural

63 Some scholars have argued that "medieval" is a western-centric term that should not be applied to the Islamic world; see Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 2: 3–11; Berkey, *The Formation of Islam*, 179. I agree that it is Eurocentric term and that politically and geographically more specific, appropriate ways of dividing pre-modern Islamic history exist, however, I would also argue, that whatever chronological or cultural term one chooses, the period under study has enough commonalities in Western Europe, Byzantium, and the Islamic world to merit them being examined and understood together.

64 Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 1–49; Consider also, for example, the proliferation of scholarly journals focusing explicitly on the Mediterranean, most of which were established in the 1980s and early 1990s: *Journal of Mediterranean Anthropology and Archaeology*, 1 (1982); *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 1 (1986); *Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean*, 1 (1988); *Journal of Mediterranean Archeology*, 1 (1988) *Mediterranean Studies Journal*, 1 (1989); *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 1 (1989); *Journal of Mediterranean Studies: History, Culture and Society in the Mediterranean World*, 1 (1991); *Journal of Mediterranean Musical Anthropology*, 1 (1996); *Mediterranean Politics* 1 (1996); *Nordicum-Mediterraneum: Icelandic e-journal of Nordic and Mediterranean Studies*, 1 (2006). One could make a similar list of research centers, programs and departments focusing on "Mediterranean Studies."

65 Braudel, *The Mediterranean*. Braudel did not invent the category of "Mediterranean" as a focus of study, however. See Horden and Purcell's historiographic discussion in *The Corrupting Sea*, 10–39.

66 Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier*; Herzfeld, "Practical Mediterraneanism"; Herzfeld, "As in Your Own House"; Herzfeld, *Anthropology through the Looking-Glass*; Herzfeld, "The Horns of the Mediterraneanist Dilemma," and discussion in Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 485–89, 515–23.

exchanges or have overwhelmingly focused on a specific region or even cities on or near the Mediterranean Sea rather than studying the Mediterranean region as a whole.[67]

Horden and Purcell attempt to reassess the various approaches to the Mediterranean in their massive study, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*. They distinguish between history *in* the Mediterranean and history *of* it. The former they define as "history *in* the region, contingently Mediterranean or best conceived under some other heading" while the latter is "history either of the whole Mediterranean or an aspect of it to which the whole is an indispensable framework."[68] They further assert that study of "Mediterranean unity" may be divided into two main approaches: the interactionst approach, which emphasizes the sea as a tool for communication and trade, and the ecologizing approach, which focuses on the Mediterranean hinterlands in a generalized fashion.[69] Expanding the older, Braudelian "interactionist" model based upon international trade and travel for which the Mediterranean Sea was a conduit, Horden and Purcell insist upon the importance of intra-regional interaction and trade, i.e. the economic, ecological, and cultural relationships developed between various hinterlands in addition to long-distance trade across the Mediterranean. Indeed, according to them, the Mediterranean paradoxically serves as both a cultural and economic divide and a bridge for the lands and cultures that surround it, a phenomenon they dub "connectivity."[70]

The current work is a history *of* the Mediterranean, in Horden and Purcell's sense, for I examine a set of questions for which "the whole [Mediterranean] is an indispensable framework," namely the ways in which the diverse religious and cultural milieu of the Mediterranean, with the strong presence of Jews, Christians, and Muslims, created an atmosphere in which shared rituals, saints, and spaces were a common, albeit contested, phenomenon. As I analyze these encounters, even under a "Mediterranean" umbrella, I do my utmost to present a nuanced study of multiple communities, keeping in mind that, for example, the perspective of a Coptic Christian differed from that of a Catholic or Orthodox one, not merely in terms of theology, but also in terms of political and cultural milieu. At the same time, while the lands surrounding the Mediterranean serve as a focus for this study because they were both profoundly interconnected, but culturally distinct, and they were part of religious, cultural and economic complexes that extended inland, rather than seaward. Thus, individual examples of the phenomena under study which were outside of the Mediterranean lands will also be examined, both as a point of comparison, but also to understand also the larger cultural milieux and links in which Mediterranean territories were situated.

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67 Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 22–49.

68 Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 2.

69 Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 10.

70 Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 5, 70, 90.