Chapter 5

OPPOSITION TO SHARED SAINTS AND FESTIVALS IN THE ISLAMICATE WORLD

Introduction

Religious leaders who opposed inter-communal mixing at festivals and other rituals claimed that shared celebrations and practices encouraged immorality—an objection that was regularly levelled both at shared and non-shared festivities—sullied the dignity of the true faith and its adherents, deviated from God's law, implied accord with the religion with which the rituals were associated, and provided opportunities by which believers could be led astray by close contact with members of other confessional communities. This last objection is often implied rather than explicitly stated. Some combination of these protestations figure in the writings of Muslim, Mizraḥi, and Sephardi Jewish, and some Eastern Christian authors, as we shall see. Despite holding many signifiers of sanctity in common with Jews and Muslims, Christianity, with its formalized designation of saints and encouragement to go on pilgrimage, not merely to a single holy site, such as Mecca or Jerusalem, but to many smaller sites dedicated to specific saints or holy events, stands out as somewhat different from Judaism and Islam, where visiting the graves of individual holy people out of reverence or to request intercession was sometimes condemned by religious leaders. The questionable legitimacy of such activities added an important layer to Jewish, and especially Muslim authorities' reaction to them in the context of interreligious relations. Not only were these customs troubling because they might involve intimate mixing between various religious communities, authors of *bida'* treatises protested that the very rituals themselves were "un-Islamic" or "un-Jewish" and accused those who participated as having been led astray, or leading others astray, even to the point of becoming a member of a different religious community.

Bida' Treatises: Protesting Shared Spaces and Shared Practices in the Islamicate Mediterranean

Beginning with the Taifa period, namely once the Umayyad caliphate and emirate disintegrated and al-Andalus divided into smaller, independent Muslim kingdoms, and continuing into the Almoravid and Almohad eras, the relative unconcern about Muslims mingling with Christians or Jews or adopting their devotional customs prevalent in early Andalusi authors such as Ibn Ḥabīb, changes.[1] Maghribi authors likewise express anxiety about Muslims adopting the festivals of other religious communities. Ibn 'Abdūn

1 On less stringent attitudes toward shared practices in the early Islamic era see Chrysostomides, "'There Is No Harm in It.'"

(late eleventh–early twelfth century CE) and 'Umar al-Jarsīfī (thirteenth century) in their *ḥisba* tractates, Abū Bakr al-Ṭurṭūshī (d. 1126 CE) in his *Kitāb al-ḥawādith wa-l-bida'*, his anonymous continuator, and al-'Azafī's *Kitāb al-durr al-munaẓẓam fī mawlid al-nabī al-mu'aẓẓam* from the mid twelfth to the thirteenth centuries, turn their energies to curtailing Muslim–*dhimmi* interactions, particularly in relation to religious imitation and shared festivals.[2] The material collected by the Moroccan author, Abū l-'Abbās ibn Yaḥya al-Wansharīsī (1430–1508 CE) indicates that such questions remained significant enough to gather and preserve them in the fifteenth century.[3]

A number of the Andalusians and Maghribis either voyaged to or settled in Egypt and the Levant, a fact which facilitated the spread of their views on interreligious relations generally, and *bida'* in particular, in the Middle East as well as in al-Andalus.[4] Moses b. Maimon, who was eventually to become Nagid, in addition to being a doctor, philosopher, and legal thinker within Judaism, is perhaps the most famous of these, however, he is far from the only one. The Andalusian Muslim, al-Ṭurṭūshī, travelled extensively throughout the Middle East before finally selecting Alexandria as his permanent residence. There he had a number of students and influenced other writers dealing with *bida'*, such as the Damascus-born Abū Shama (1203–1268).[5] Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 1336) likewise came from North Africa, although he concentrated his energies on refuting innovative practices in Egypt.[6] Many of the same themes that appear in texts dealing with religious innovation in Iberia and North Africa also characterize those from Egypt and the Levant, although with a greater focus on specifically Egyptian customs and holy sites. A number of Muslim chroniclers likewise turned their attention to Muslim participation in Christian and Jewish rituals, usually to denigrate such behaviour.[7] While problematizing interreligious mixing or imitation was not by any means the sole subject of these works, the predominance of such themes in works coming from Iberia, North Africa, the Levant, and Egypt stand in contrast with *bida'* treatises from outside this area, such as the *Talbis Iblis* (*Devil's Delusion*) by the Baghdadi author, Abū al-Faraj ibn al-Jawzī (ca. 1116–1200 CE). Ibn al-Jawzī deals primarily with internal divisions in Islam or refutes other religions outright rather than discussing Muslims' imitations of non-Muslims. He dedicates a single chapter to *bida'* per se, and even there rarely mentions Jews, Christians, or Zoroastrians. On the few occasions where he does mention Muslim adoption of

2 The dating and exact authorship of *Kitāb al-durr al-munaẓẓam fī mawlid al-nabī al-mu'aẓẓam* is somewhat complicated. See Granja, "Fiestas cristianas en al-Andalus (Materiales para su estudio) I"; Kaptein, *Muḥammad's Birthday Festival*, 76–80.

3 Lehmann, "Islamic Legal Consultation and Jewish–Muslim *Convivencia*"; Idris, Les Tributaires en Occident Musulman médiéval"; Granja, "Fiestas cristianas en al-Andalus (Materiales para su estudio) II."

4 Frenkel, "Muslim Pilgrimage."

5 *EI*, "*Bid'a*"; Maribel Fierro's introduction to al-Ṭurṭūshī's *Kitāb al-ḥawādit wa-l-bida' = El libro de las novedades y las innovaciones*, 171; Fierro, "The Treatises against Innovations"; Abū Shāmah, *Al-Bā'ith 'ala inkār al-bida' wa al-ḥawādith*, 57.

6 Fierro, "The Treatises against Innovations."

7 Lutfi, "Coptic Festivals of the Nile." For a more detailed discussion, see below.

Magian or Jewish practices, he indicates that they are undesirable and innovations but does not dwell at length upon them.[8]

Less material by Christian and Jewish authors that systematically addresses innovation and rapprochement has surfaced. Unlike the Muslims, neither Christians nor Jews from the Islamicate world developed a genre specifically dedicated to the question of *bida'*. Nevertheless, this issue appears in other types of literature, such as apocalypses, chronicles, religious treatises, and letters. Of particular importance in this regard were letters to the state. When Jews and Christians were faced with a dispute that they could not satisfactorily resolve internally, one option was to turn to the Muslim authorities. Jews and Christians alike made use of Muslim discomfort with religious innovation by appealing directly to the Muslim state, against "injustices" *mazālim*. These were typically social or administrative injustices, or attempts to get the Muslim authorities to intercede in questions of succession of the head of a religious community. They also included internal matters relating to ritual or belief however, both in their discussions between religious leaders and in their official missives to the government.[9]

Local Factors of Mixing and Demarcation from al-Andalus to Egypt

While the similarity between al-Andalus and North Africa to Egypt and the Levant may be attributed in part to the migration and influence of Mālikī jurists from the West, I would argue that Egypt and the Levant, like al-Andalus and the Maghrib, had substantial minority populations with whom Muslims mingled freely as co-workers, neighbours, and family members—indeed, as Tamar el-Leithy has shown, in Egypt before 1354 CE Coptic households in which the man had converted to Islam were likely to have remained primarily Christian.[10] Furthermore, in al-Andalus, much of the Maghrib, and in Egypt and the Levant, Jews and Christians had frequently enjoyed a high level of support from Muslim political leaders. Mohammed Tahar Mansouri argues that North African Christians, attracted by the new Fatimid regime because of its receptivity to employing non-Muslims, faced pressures to convert to Islam to avoid suspicion that they might ally with outside Christian forces. Fatimids drew sharp criticism in the Maghrib for what the Sunni majority perceived as their tolerant or even preferential treatment of *dhimmis*,

8 Most of Ibn al-Jawzī's *Talbīs Iblīs* was translated by D. S. Margoliouth in a series of articles in *Islamic Culture: The Hyderabad Quarterly Review*, from 1935 to 1938. Margoliouth elected not to translate the section on *bida'* (section 2). This section also does not address Muslim imitation of other religious groups to any notable degree. See Ibn al-Jawzī *Kitāb Talbīs Iblīs*, 82–134, https://ia804505.us.archive.org/16/items/talbis-iblis-al-imam-ibnul-jauzi/Talbis%20Iblis%20-%20Al-Imam%20Ibnul%20Jauzi.pdf, accessed 30 October 2023. Examples where Ibn al-Jawzī does mention Muslims adopting the practices of non-Muslims include: Margoliouth, 10/1 (1936): 10/2 (1936), 177. Also compare with 9/3 (1935), 388–99 where he discusses the problems of imitation generally, but without going into details about individual practices or focusing specifically on imitating non-Muslims.

9 Krakowski, *Coming of Age in Medieval Egypt*, 82–83; Rustow, "The Legal Status of *Dimmī-s* in the Fatimid East"; el-Leithy, "Coptic Culture and Conversion," 416–17, 435–39; Goitein, "Petitions to Fatimid Caliphs."

10 el-Leithy, "Coptic Culture and Conversion," 67–100, 181–98.

to the point that the Fatimids were strongly associated with Jews, both because they appointed Jews to governmental positions and because, like the Jews, they traced their identity through the female line; their ancestry from the Prophet Muḥammad, and thus their claim to power, derived from Muḥammad's daughter, Fāṭima. Such accusations followed them to Egypt.[11] Similarly in al-Andalus, *dhimmi* regularly attained positions of power and mingled freely on a daily basis with Muslims, much to the consternation of some Muslim poets and legalists.[12] Thus in both al-Andalus and the Maghrib the Muslim leadership regularly provided Jews and Christians with opportunities of advancement which in turn heightened resentment and anxiety about the *dhimmi* in other sectors of the Muslim population, especially those who saw themselves as guardians of Islamic law.

Such intimacy became more alarming to many Muslims and some Jews and Christians by the period of the Crusades and though the sixteenth century, as European Christian powers continued to plot the conquest of Jerusalem and the downfall of Muslim power.[13] Salah al-Dīn (1171–1193), during his rule of the region and his repelling of the crusaders, attempted to reestablish and enforce old laws that distinguished *dhimmi* from Muslims, but then found himself having to deter mob violence against local Christians. During the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods generally, congenial relations between Copts and other local Christian communities and Muslims were troubled by increased scrutiny and regulation on the part of the Muslim leadership and resentment and periodic outbreaks of violence by elements of the Muslim population at large. Muslims feared an alliance between their Christian subjects, or worse, Ethiopian Christians and the crusaders and they resented the prevalence of non-Muslims in governmental positions that granted them power over Muslims.[14]

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11 Mansouri, "Juifs et Chrétiens." Mansouri suggests that Fāṭmids often drew upon *dhimmi* support because they saw *dhimmi* as more trustworthy than the Sunni majority whom the Fāṭmids ruled. Yet texts linking Fāṭmids with *dhimmi*, while not devoid of any basis in actual practice, need to be approached with caution, since the Shi'i–Jewish connection was mired in rhetoric on the part of both Sunni and Shi'i authors and pre-dated the Fāṭmids. Strong connections, both real and imagined, also existed between Shi'i and Jewish communities in the Iran–Iraq regions during the late Umayyad and early Abbasid eras, which in turn provided fuel for later Sunni authors in their polemic against *dhimmi*, the Shi'i Fatimids, and other Sunni Muslims with whom they disagreed. On this see Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur'an*, 76–82, 186–89, 214; Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew*, 82–85, 93–108, 116–35; Chokr, *Zandaqa et Zindīqs en Islam*, 144. Rubin's study clearly indicates that the Shi'i themselves embraced comparison with Jews and their history, albeit with very particular rhetorical contexts. Other scholars have been inclined to view suggestions in later Sunni sources that Fāṭmids were lenient with or inclined to join *dhimmis*, as entirely a reflection of anti-Fāṭmid rhetoric. See Rustow, "The Legal Status of *Dimmī-s* in the Fatimid East"; Lutfi, "Coptic Festivals of the Nile."

12 Brann, *Power in the Portrayal*; al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-ḥawādith wa-al-bida'*, ed. Talbi, 139–40.

13 On the continuation of crusading hopes into the later medieval and early modern periods see Knobler, *Mythology and Diplomacy*; Housley, *The Later Crusades*; Riley-Smith, *The Crusades*, 245–308.

14 Micheau, "Eastern Christianities," and Cowe, "The Armenians in the Era of the Crusades." On fear of eastern Christian, especially Coptic, collusion with Crusaders or Byzantines see Lutfi, "Coptic Festivals of the Nile"; Perlemann, "Notes on anti-Christian Propaganda in the Mamluk

During the later Middle Ages the situations in Iberia and the Maghrib were somewhat different. On the one hand, as a number of scholars have underscored, Muslim and Christian leaders were not automatically at odds with one another, and frequently allied with one another against a common political enemy.[15] Yet as the "reconquest" of Iberia by Christians progressed, Muslims (and Jews) increasingly found themselves having to adapt to life under Christian rule even as Christian authorities had to adjust to having a substantial Muslim minority population in addition to a Jewish one within their kingdoms. Frequently, Muslims, Christians, and Jews were well integrated in their daily economic, professional, and social pursuits, whether that had to do with trade, market places, or tax evasion, and abuses were often opportunistic rather than grounded in religious differences.[16] The obvious practice of other religious rituals, the opportunity for or fear of conversion or sexual intimacy across confessional lines, the suspicion of insincere conversion, and anger over governmental protection or economic favouritism, nevertheless, did prompt conflict, even violence between communities.[17]

Empire"; al-Nābulusi, *Histoires Coptes d'un Cadi medieval*, 133–50, relevant passages on 137, 146–48; al-Nābulusi, *The Sword of Ambition*; Ibn Wāsiṭī, "An Answer to the Dhimmis," 383–457, relevant pages Arabic 394, 400–402, English 426–27, 435–38; Ibn Naqqash, "*Fetoua relative,*" 442, 479–82; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *'Aḥkām 'ahl al-dhimma*, 1:218. A number of these passages deal with a particular incident in which letters to the Franks with sensitive material in the house of the Christian advisor, Abu al-Faḍl ibn Dukhān, to al-'Adid (1160–1171). On expectations of Coptic or European Christian alliance with Ethiopia see HOPC vol. 3, pt. 1, Arabic, 56–57, English, 34–35 (where the Coptic patriarch plays upon Mamluk fear of Ethiopian military action to convince the Mamluk sultan to appoint a new metropolitan who would have more authority than the current one and be more independent of the Coptic patriarch); Krebs, *Medieval Ethiopian Kingship*, 61–62, 65–71, 85–91, 130; Krebs, "Crusading Threats?"; Knobler, *Mythology and Diplomacy*, 36–43; Knobler, "Power of Distance." Krebs and Knobler both demonstrate that a crusading alliance between European and Ethiopian Christians was a matter of European fantasy and Mamluk paranoia; Ethiopians themselves were interested in the trade of goods and artisans. Some scholars persist in maintaining that the Ethiopians themselves desired military alliance against Muslim powers in this period, however. See, for example, Kurt, "The Search for Prester John." For further examples see Krebs' discussion in *Medieval Ethiopian Kingship*, 224–25n13. On employment of *dhimmi* in government positions see Yarbrough, *Friends of the Emir*; Yarbrough, "A Rather Small Genre"; Yarbrough, "Upholding God's Rule"; Cohen, *Under Crescent & Cross*, 65–68; Cohen, *Jewish Self-Government in Medieval Egypt*, 219–21; Fattal, *Le Statut Légal*, 240–42; Ashtor, *The Jews of Moslem Spain*, vol.2/3: 41–189; Northrup, "Muslim–Christian Relations"; Little, "Coptic Converts to Islam"; Little, "Coptic Conversion to Islam under the Baḥrī Mamluks, 692–755/1293–1354"; Richards, "The Coptic Bureaucracy under the Mamluks"; Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City*, 21.

15 Remensnyder, "The Virgin and the King"; Lowney, *A Vanished World*, 68, 105–6, 123–24; O'Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade*, 23, 59–64, 66–67, 95, 163–164.

16 Catlos, *Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom*, 185–86, 377, 410, 424–34, 437–44; Lowney, *A Vanished World*, 204–7; Constable, *Trade and Traders*.

17 Tartakoff, *Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder*; Tartakoff, *Between Christian and Jew*; Catlos, *Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom*, 321, 386, 463–64, 472–76, 511; Nirenberg, *Neighboring Faiths*; Nirenberg, "Conversion, Sex, and Segregation"; Nirenberg, "Religious and Sexual Boundaries."

The Maghrib differed from both Iberia and the Middle East in that it eventually lost its Christian population.[18] John Tolan, in his study of the writings of the Catalan Dominican Raymond of Peñafort (ca. 1175–1275 CE), has demonstrated that there were still indigenous, Arabic speaking Christians in North Africa in the thirteenth century, but that their situation was precarious. Many of these maintained that Muḥammad was a prophet and went on *ziyāra* to the tomb of Ibn Tumart, founder of the Almohad movement, some sincerely, others as a way of dissembling their Christian identity. Intermarriage, ignorance of basic tenets of Christianity, and the necessity to practise Christianity in secret were common.[19] By the time Leo Africanus, the Maghribian traveller and convert from Islam to Christianity, wrote his description of North Africa in the early sixteenth century, he recorded the presence of numerous and thriving Jewish communities, some of which had been augmented by Iberian Jews after their expulsion from Spain in 1492, but no indigenous Christian ones. The Christians who were there were foreign merchants or slaves captured during battles with the Portuguese or Spanish.[20] These Christians, however, occasionally proselytized among Jews, with some success, so that into the early seventeenth century, Jewish leaders in North Africa felt compelled to address Christian beliefs and argumentation. Whether Jews and Christians shared practices or venerated any of the same holy dead is less clear.[21] The absence of a substantial Christian minority removed a source of anxiety and conflict common to al-Andalus and the Middle East, however, as we shall see, it did not eliminate concern about Muslims participating in Christian festivals.

At the same time that sources indicate increased tension and resentment among some parts of the Muslim population toward *dhimmi*, or Christians toward Jews and Muslims; however, evidence in the Muslim world also points not merely to increased socializing between various religious communities, but to certain borrowed or shared religious customs becoming so commonplace as to be taken for granted. The intensity of those legalists who continued to object to these practices seems to have derived in part from their frustration at being widely ignored.

18 Talbi, "Le Christianisme maghrébin"; Epalza, "Mozarabs."

19 Tolan, "Ramon de Penyafort's *Responses to Questions*"; Tolan, "Marchands, mercenaires et captifs"; Raymond of Peñafort, *Summa de paenitentia*, 1.7.7, cols. 334–335.

20 Leo Africanus, *Cosmographia de l'Affrica*, 164–65, 171–72, 180–81, 182, 188, 190–91, 193, 194, 211, 213, 216, 220, 229, 237–38, 244, 250, 323, 352–53, 384, 449, 451, 457, 487; Leo Africanus, *Description de l'Afrique*, 1:52, 60, 74–75, 76–77, 83, 85–86, 89, 91, 112, 114, 117, 121, 131, 142, 147, 149, 170, 234, 268, 303, 2:382, 387, 428–29.

21 Ohana, "Jewish–Christian Polemics"; Galinsky, "Different Approaches." Galinsky is mostly concerned with Ashkenaz and France from the thirteenth century, but he provides some evidence for Iberia and the Islamicate world as well.

Reprehensible Behaviours: Imitating/Inviting Others and Joining Celebrations

Al-Andalus and the Maghrib

Both Ibn ʿAbdūn and ʿUmar al-Jarsīfī, when addressing Muslim relations with *dhimmi* in al-Andalus and the Maghrib, focused primarily on limiting social interaction and demarcating difference via clothing and food.[22] Concerns about sexual impropriety far outweigh anxiety about religious interactions or borrowings. For example, like the early medieval author, Ibn Ḥabīb, Ibn ʿAbdūn and al-Jarsīfī protest the mixing of Muslims and non-Muslims in the bathhouse. All of the authors expressed concern about the potential violations in Muslim–*dhimmi* hierarchy that such communal bathing might cause, although Ibn Ḥabīb centres on the unseemliness of Muslim women being naked in front of *dhimmi* women, whereas Ibn ʿAbdūn prohibits Muslims from performing "vile tasks" (الارذلين) for Jews or Christians, such as massaging them or grooming their animals. Al-Jarsīfi also admonishes Muslims not to accept vile or humiliating work from *dhimmi*, and he lists some of the possibilities, but bath-house tasks are not among them.[23] Ibn Ḥabīb implies a danger of incorrect religious behaviour, but does not explicitly associate bathing and "heresy".[24] Ibn ʿAbdūn, however, makes no connection between the *ḥammām* and religion, rather he prohibits meeting women at the *ḥammām* since doing so serves as a precursor to illicit sexual liaisons.[25] Al-Jarsīfī is even more circumspect than Ibn ʿAbdūn, and merely urges people to cover their genitals at public bathhouses.[26] When Ibn ʿAbdūn finally does discuss a religious space, he portrays Muslim women attending church and facing perils similar to those in the bathhouse: "It is necessary that Muslim women be prohibited from entering the abominable churches; for the clergymen are sexually licentious and sodomites."[27] Ibn ʿAbdūn even goes so far as to suggest legislating against Christian women from entering the church except on religious holidays since they eat, drink, and fornicate with the clergy.[28]

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22 García-Sanjuán, "Jews and Christians in Almoravid Seville"; ʿal-Jarsīfī, *Risālah*, 122–123; ʿal-Jarsīfī, "Traités de *Ḥisba*," esp. 368–69.

23 al-Jarsīfī, *Risālah*, 123; ʿal-Jarsīfī, "Traités de *Ḥisba*," 369.

24 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb Adab al-Nisāʾ*, 232–36 nos. 154–158; Ibn ʿAbdūn, "Risālah Ibn ʿAbdūn," 48; Ibn ʿAbdūn, [*Risālah*] *Sevilla a comienzos del siglo XII*, no. 153, pp. 149–50. Also see discussion in Chapter 3.

25 Ibn ʿAbdūn, *Risālah*, Arabic, 49, Spanish transl. no. 155, p. 151. Discussion of bath houses, 367.

26 al-Jarsīfī, *Risālah*, 121; al-Jarsīfī, "Traités de *Ḥisba*," 367.

27 يجب ان يمنع النساء المسلمات دخول الكنائس المشنوعة فان القسيسيين فسقة زناة لوطة; Ibn ʿAbdūn, *Risālah*, Arabic, 48, Spanish, no. 154 p. 150; García-Sanjuán, "Jews and Christians in Almoravid Seville."

28 يجب ان تمنع الافرنجيات من الدخول في الكنيسة الا في يوم فضل او عيد فانهن ياكلن ويشربن ويزنين مع القسيسين; Ibn ʿAbdūn, *Risālah*. Ibn ʿAbdūn's remarks need to be seen in part as part of an ongoing Muslim polemic about Christians, especially Christian clergy and Western Christians. The periodic sexual adventures with Christians that punctuate *diyārāt* literature appear in other genres, indeed, in much of medieval Arabic literature Christian women and men alike are portrayed as sexually promiscuous, both in terms same-sex and heterosexual activities. On this topic see Cuffel,

What is striking is that despite Ibn ʿAbdūn's efforts to discourage Muslims from interacting with Jews and Christians socially, he expresses neither surprise nor *religious* disapproval of Muslim women entering churches.[29] Rather he writes as if such a practice were commonplace. While this portrayal of Muslim interest in and untroubled use of churches might be seen as a continuation of the kind of behaviour described in the anonymous *Kitāb al-ghurabāʾ* (*The Book of Strangers*) or al-Shābushtī's *Kitāb al-Diyārāt* (*The Book of Monasteries*) or even some of the ḥadīth, the easy touristic curiosity that characterizes these other works and the later Muslim travel narratives discussed in the previous chapter, is missing in Ibn ʿAbdūn's *ḥisba* treatise. The connection between churches and potential sexual liaisons portrayed in early medieval works remains; however, Ibn ʿAbdūn depicts Muslim women rather than men seeking out the churches. Furthermore, he portrays the churches as being a legitimate (or at least uncontested) religious destination for Muslims during holidays. Given that Muslims in Seville were going to churches during religious festivals (which ones, Ibn ʿAbdūn does not specify), Muslim presence in churches on other occasions was probably prompted by pious motives as well. Al-ʿAzafī provides a more detailed description of Muslim activities in churches:

> I said to Saḥnūn, "By us (in our country) when there are the festivals of the Christians they say to the children, 'Let us come with an egg, and gifts we shall exchange [with] you at the church.'" He said, "What thing is this?" I said, "Like Christmas (*mīlād*) and *ʿAnṣara* they exchange them and receive gifts from them." He said, "This is an evil man, he should not lead prayer, replace him and put forward [someone] other than him who is superior to him."[30]

Al-ʿAzafī is quoting a conversation between earlier sources. Saḥnūn was the ninth-century legal scholar from Qairawan largely responsible for bringing Mālik's *Muwaṭṭaʾ* to North Africa and author of his own influential code, the *Mudawwana*.[31] In the broader context of al-ʿAzafī's battle to replace non-Muslim festivals with a *mawlid* for the Prophet Muḥammad, however, his citation of a ninth-century source need not indicate that he was referring to customs no longer practised in his own time, quite the contrary. He was seeking to provide as much "proof" as possible from past authorities that celebrating non-Muslim festivals constituted deplorable *bidaʿ* in order to strengthen his case.[32] This

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"Polemicizing Women's Bathing"; Cuffel, "Reorienting Christian 'Amazons'"; Evans, "'Unfit to Bear Arms'"; Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 347–51; Rowson, "The Categorization of Gender and Sexual Irregularity."

29 For a fulsome discussion of all the issues regarding Muslim–*dhimmi* interactions in Ibn ʿAbdūn, see García-Sanjuán, "Jews and Christians in Almoravid Seville"; Fierro, "Christian Success and Muslim Fear."

30 قلت لسحنون: انهم عندنا اذا كان اعياد النصارى قالوا للصبيان: جيئونا ببيض و هدايا نقلبكم الى الكنائس. قال: اي شئ هذا. قلت: مثل الميلاد و العنصرة يقلبونهم و يأخذون منهم الهدايا. قال: هذا بئش الرجل, لا يصلى خلفه و يقدم غيره ان قووا على ذلك; Granja, "Fiestas cristianas en al-Andalus (Materiales para su estudio) I," Arabic, 24, Spanish, 40–41.

31 His full name was Abū Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Salām b. Saʿīd b. Ḥabīb b. Ḥassān b. Hilāl b. Bakkār b. Rabīʿa al-Tanūkhī. *EI*, "*Saḥnūn*."

32 Kaptein, *Muḥammad's Birthday Festival*, 76–96.

and other passages which aimed at invalidating these "shared" festivals and which drew from early authors, in combination with Ibn ʿAbdūn's remark suggest that many of the practices that individuals such as Saḥnūn or al-Qābisī had condemned not only continued into later periods in Iberia and parts of the Maghrib, but were accepted as part of the "normal" annual cycle by Muslims and their non-Muslim neighbours. Saḥnūn blames the Muslim religious leader who allows Muslims to go with their children to church in order to exchange gifts, implying that some authorities ignored or approved of such activities. Ibn ʿAbdūn himself, as noted before, is preoccupied with preventing sexual misbehaviour in churches rather than preventing Muslims from partaking of celebrations there.

This impression that many of the "shared" religious practices that had been singled out as *bidaʿ* by earlier authors, had become acceptable to many by the twelfth and thirteenth century in al-Andalus and the Maghrib is strengthened by al-Jarsīfī's discussion of *Mahrajan*. Whereas earlier authors had listed celebrating this festival or accepting gifts during it as condemnable *bidaʿ*, al-Jarsīfī does not prohibit its celebration, rather he urges officials to prevent men and youths from spraying water on the streets or playing with gourds and bats.[33] Thus the issue was not the legitimacy of the holiday, merely conduct during it. Several centuries later, Leo Africanus observed:

> Still in the said city (Fez) there remain some vestiges of certain festivals of the Christians and they pronounce there certain words that they don't even understand themselves. On the first night of the year of the Christians, the children go with certain masks on their face to demand fruits from the houses of the inhabitants of the town, singing songs. On that night they cook together various vegetables, such as broad beans, chickpeas, and grains of wheat and eat this food that night instead of a confection. On the day of the birth of Christ they have the custom of cooking a mixture of seven types of cabbage, radishes, carrots, and others. On the night and day of St. John, in all the quarters, they make great fires and gathering straw they make the fire.[34]

Slightly earlier in his narrative, Leo explains: "There remains certain names of festivals which are still used today and which the Christians observed, but one no longer knows the reason why they celebrate these festivals. In each town, it is the custom to observe festivals and practices which the Christians left since the period they domi-

33 al-Jarsīfī, *Risālah*, 123–24; al-Jarsīfī, "Traités de *Ḥisba*," 370.

34 Etiam in la dicta ciptà remaseno certi vestigii de certe feste de Christiani e fanno certi motti in quelli di, ma loro medesimi non li sanno perché quando lo primo di l'anno de Christiani vanno li putti con certe mascare sul viso a domandare li frutti da le case de li ciptadini cantando certe loro canzone. E in quella nocte coceno de ogni legume integro como sonno fave e ceceri e lentichie e grano e lo magnano in quella nocte in locho de confectione. E in la nocte di natale usano de cenare una menestra facta de septe sorte de herbe como cauli, rape, carote et alter verdure. E in la nocte e in el di di sancto Ioanne fanno grandi fochi per tutte le contrade e comparano paglia e fanno el dicto focho. Leo Africanus, *Cosmographia de l'Affrica*, 301; Compare translation with a slightly different translation in Giovanni Leone Africano, *Description d'Afrique*, 1:212–13.

nated Africa."[35] Like al-Jarsīfī, Leo does not problematize these Muslims' celebration of non-Muslim festivals. Rather he presents these customs as a point of local interest. Such a neutral depiction is in part typical of the travel-writing genre in the Islamic world, where authors only occasionally pass judgment on what they see.[36] However, Leo did not hesitate to criticize other kinds of religious practices that he encountered, specifically certain Sufi practices, individual sites for *ziyāra* and the veneration of various living holy men.[37] Leo's description seems to be the last stage in a long process by which Christian festivals were incorporated into the yearly rota of Muslim celebrations, even after Christians themselves no longer dwelt in the region, and most Muslims had forgotten the religious significance or origin of the holidays. Drawing from the suggestions of Mikel de Epalza and Mohammad Talbi about the conversion process of Christians under Muslim rule in al-Andalus and the Maghrib respectively, one possibility is that these Muslims whom Leo describes were once Christians who, in generations past, had slid imperceptibly into Muslim identity.[38] Yet the readiness of many Muslims during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to join in festivities with Christians and Jews, to imitate their practices, or visit their holy spaces, suggests that some Muslims also simply adopted the customs of those around them.

Not all Andalusi or Maghribi Muslim religious leaders were so cavalier as the *ḥisba* writers or Leo Africanus. In addition to collecting the comments of early authors, al-Wansharīsī also cites a number of rulings, spanning from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, prohibiting Muslims from receiving gifts or special food during *dhimmi* festivals either from other Muslims or from non-Muslim neighbours, renting or selling goods needed for Christian festivals, imitating Jewish women's prohibitions against measuring grain during menstruation, or sounding a trumpet like the Jews during the nights of Ramadan or at the end of prayer.[39] Presumably al-Wansharīsī was attempting to discour-

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35 E remase la dicta usanza fine al tempo presente como se retrova altri motti de feste de Christiani li quali quasi se observano fin mo, ma lor medesimi non sanno per che causa se fanno una de quelle feste. E in ciascaduna terra se usa de observare certe feste o zanze remaseno al tempo anticho de Christiani, cioè quando dominorono l'Affrica. Leo Africanus, *Cosmographia de l'Affrica*, 279–80; Leo Africanus, *Description de l'Afrique*, 1:190. Compare with Leo Africanus, *Cosmographia de l'Affrica*, 419–20; Leo Africanus, *Description de l'Afrique*, 2:343–44 where Muslims and their descendants who had converted to Christianity under the Goths and then reconverted to Islam still tattooed a cross on themselves.

36 See Chapter 4.

37 Leo Africanus, *Cosmographia de l'Affrica*, 309–15, 415–16, 547, 548; Leo Africanus, *Description de l'Afrique*, 1:220–25, 2:340–41, 509, 510.

38 Epalza, "Mozarabs"; Talbi, "Le christianisme maghrébin."

39 Aḥmed ibn Yahya al-Wansharīsī, *Al-Mi'yār al-mu'rib wa-al-jāmi' al-mughrib 'an fātāwā' ahl Ifrīqīya wa-al-Andalus wa-al-Maghrib* (Fez 1896–1898), Food and gifts: 8.160–161, 11.88, selling things needed for festivals: 2.383, 5. 186–87, 2.358–401; menstrual customs: 2.358–401, sounding trumpet: 2.358–401, as cited in Idris, "Les Tributaires en Occident Musulman medieval"; Granja, "Fiestas cristianas en al-Andalus (Materiales para su estudio), II." Seemingly, the permission granted by Muslims legalists, noted by Freidenreich, to *give* charity to non-Muslims did not extend to *accepting* gifts from *dhimmis*. Freidenreich, "Christians in Early and Classical Shī 'ī Law"; Freidenreich, "Christians in Early and Classical Sunnī Law."

age precisely the phenomena described by Leo Africanus, namely Muslims' continued observance of Christian holidays, although references to the imitation of or participation in Jewish rituals may reflect ongoing Jewish influence in sixteenth-century North Africa.

While al-Ṭurṭūshī's work from the twelfth century can in many ways be seen as repeating or mirroring the efforts of earlier ḥadith collectors, like al-Malik, the progenitor of the legal school to which al-Ṭurṭūshī belonged, or of earlier Andalusi and Maghribi authors targeting *bida'*, there is a difference both in the degree and extent to which al-Ṭurṭūshī associated *bida'* with *dhimmi*. For example, both Ibn Ḥabīb and al-Ṭurṭūshī address Jewish women's behaviour in the synagogue. Yet Ibn Ḥabīb dedicates one paragraph to the issue, whereas al-Ṭurṭūshī provides four paragraphs of traditions and discussions about Jewish women's customs and prohibitions in the synagogue, plus two additional paragraphs that discuss similar behaviour among Muslims.[40] Elsewhere, al-Ṭurṭūshī condemns raising one's hands in invocation at the *minbar* as a Jewish custom.[41] To a greater degree than the early anti-*bida'* writer, Muḥammad ibn Waḍḍāḥ al-Qurṭubī (815–900 CE), al-Ṭurṭūshī also attributes a number innovations to imitating Christians as well as Jews, or to Christians alone. He compares the practice of singing the Qur'an with the singing of Christians generally, and in particular to monks and bishops.[42] Memorizing the Qur'an without understanding its contents, decorating mosques (and Qur'ans) are condemnable practices derived from the Christians and Jews, according to al-Ṭurṭūshī.[43]

So far, al-Ṭurṭūshī's primary concern seems to have been to identify "new" practices not indigenous to Islam.[44] Yet anxiety about Muslim–*dhimmi* relations in al-Andalus was not confined to rituals imbued with obvious religious import:

> One innovation is that all the people in the land of al-Andalus gather to buy *halwa* on the night of 27 Ramadan (the night on which the revelation of the Qur'an is celebrated), and similarly to buy fruit, like the Christians at the celebration of January (referring to New Year's Eve) and at the celebration of *al-'Anṣara* (Pentacost) and Maundy Thursday to purchase fried doughnuts and

40 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb Adab al-Nisā'*, 242, no. 168; al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-ḥawādith wa-al-bida'*, nos. 46–51, pp. 118–22; al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-ḥawādit wa-l-bida' = El libro de las novedades y las innovaciones*, nos. 46–51, pp. 215–217; M. J. Kister, "Do Not Assimilate Yourselves," chap 6. This article was originally published in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 12 (1989): 321–53. Kister lists other authors' efforts to discourage Muslims from imitating of Jewish prayer rituals.

41 al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-ḥawādith wa-al-bida'*, no. 100, pp. 155–56; al-Ṭurṭūshī, *El libro de las novedades y las innovacione*, no.100, pp. 244–45; Compare with Ibn Waḍḍāh, *Kitāb al-bida'*, XI.3a; M. Fierro, "The Treatises against Innovations"; M. J. Kister, "Do Not Assimilate Yourselves."

42 al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-ḥawādith wa-al-bida'*, nos. 138–139, pp. 188–89; al-Ṭurṭūshī, *El libro de las novedades y las innovacione*, nos. 138–39, p. 267; Compare with Ibn Waḍḍāh, *Kitāb al-bida'*, XII.46; Fierro, "The Treatises against Innovations."

43 al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-ḥawādith wa-al-bida'*, nos. 170–183, pp. 211–23; al-Ṭurṭūshī, *El libro de las novedades y las innovacione*, nos.170–183, pp. 282–89; Fierro, "The Treatises against Innovations." Compare with Ibn Waḍḍāh, *Kitāb al-bida'*, VI.1–2.

44 Not all, or even most "innovations" were attributed to non-Muslim influence.

> cheese fritters, both of which are innovative foods. Men go out mingling with the women separately and in groups, to enjoy spectacles, and they do the same on Muslim festivals of *ʻīd al-aḍḥā* (the feast of sacrifice, marking Abraham's willingness to kill a ram instead of his son Ishmael) and *ʻīd al-fiṭr* (the feast for breaking the fast of Ramadan)…The women set up pavilions there to watch and not to pray. And women enter the *ḥammām* (bath house) with women of the book (Jews and Christians) without a covering. Muslims with unbelievers in the *ḥammām*, and the *ḥammām* is *bidaʻ* and luxury.[45]

In this addition to al-Ṭurṭūshī's text, Christians and Muslims both go out and purchase special foods, men and women mingle, and together watch spectacles (للتفرج) on Christian holidays. Innovative foods and the mingling of men and women, seemingly regardless of religious affiliation, are problematized as much as the shared attendance of the festivals themselves. Disturbing too, for the author is that Muslims have appropriated Christian foods and ways of celebrating and applied them to distinctly Muslim celebrations. The author creates a parallel between this religious intermingling and Muslim women bathing together naked with non-Muslim women.

Doughnuts or cheese fritters might seem odd subjects for religious censure, yet as we have seen from both al-Ṭurṭūshī's remarks and those of the much later Leo Africanus, specific foods were important signifiers for holidays, sometimes outlasting other more obviously religiously significant customs. As I have argued elsewhere, "styles of food" were often profound markers of personal and local identities which could be linked to or in competition with religious identity. Beginning around the twelfth-century, Muslim authors, like al-Ṭurṭūshī, were increasingly unwilling to condone foodways and other customs which affirmed competing bonds of community which risked superseding or "out-dazzling" those of Islam, regardless of these foods' status according to Islamic dietary regulations[46] Furthermore, eating the same foods during Muslim festivals as the Christians did during their own celebrations in essence made Muslim and Christian holidays indistinguishable from one another, even as Muslims and *dhimmi* themselves became indistinguishable as they sat together, naked in the *ḥammām*. Likewise, while the mingling of men and women opened the potential for inappropriate sexual liaisons, their free intermixing also blurred the distinction between the genders. Thus this, and, as we shall see, similar expressions of anxiety about festivals are about the violation of boundaries on multiple levels, not just between religious groups.

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45 و من البدع اجتماع الناس بارض الاندلس على ابتياع الحلوى ليلة سبع و عشرين من رمضان: و كذالك على اقامة ينير بابتياع الفواكه كالعجم: و اقامة العنصرة و خميس ابريل بشراء المجبنات و الاسفنج و هى من الاطعمة المبتدعة. و خروج الرجال جميعا او اشتاتا مع النساء مختلطين للتفرج , و كذالك يفعلون فى أيام العيد و يخرجون للمصلى. و يقمن فيه الخيم للتفرج لا للصلاة. و دخول الحمام للنساء مع الكتابيات بغير مئزر : و المسلمين مع الكفار في الحمام, و الحمام من البدع و من النعيم; al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-ḥawādith wa-al-bidaʻ*, ed. Talbi, 140–41 and in Melville and Ubaydli, eds., *Christians and Moors in Spain*, 3:120–21. On this passage and its authorship see *El libro de las novedades y las innovaciones*, 134 (2.4.6); Granja, "Fiestas cristianas en al-Andalus (Materiales para su studio) II", esp. 120–24. Compare with Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal*, 1:297–98.

46 Cuffel, "Legal but Not Licit."

The position in *Kitāb al-ḥawādith wa-al-bida'* was not the only one. Akin to early medieval Christian authors attempting to substitute Christian rites for Pagan ones in controlling the weather or other supernatural interventions studied by Valerie Flint, al-'Azafī vehemently protests Muslim interest and participation in Christian festivals on the one hand, but offers a Muslim "equivalent" on the other, namely the *mawlīd al-nabī*.[47] In his case, resemblance between festivities is less important than ensuring that Muslims celebrate a centrally Muslim figure, rather than ones primarily associated with another religion.[48] Despite the difference in their approaches, both al-Ṭurṭūshī and al-'Azafī sought to create or solidify a predominantly *Muslim* identity in contrast to one which blurred the boundaries between Muslims, Christians, and to a lesser extent, Jews.

Egypt and the Levant

Religious communities of Egypt and the Levant likewise contended with co-religionists' willingness to attend the holiday celebrations of other communities, to invite outsiders to their own holy days and places, to engage in frivolities in the form of games and special foods rather than prayer, and to come together in mixed groups that placed participants in the path of sexual temptation. Not all common behaviours or forms of mixing were festive, however. Jewish, Christian, and Muslim authors fretted over more mundane forms of cross-communal imitation as well. For example, indications that leaders within the Coptic Christian community worried that some of their co-religionists were becoming too similar to their Muslim neighbours appear anecdotally in apocalypses and chronicles. An apocalypse dating anywhere from the eighth to the eleventh century predicts that the practice of giving Arabic names and teaching Arabic to children will end in a loss of religious identity and outsiders' inability to recognize Christians.[49] The author further predicts that churches will fall to ruin through disuse, and will be empty during holy days and Sunday.[50] Not only does the author fear for his own community, but warns that many different communities of Christians, Jews, and the peoples of the Maghrib and India will imitate those from the "hegira," and engage in immoral activities as a result.[51]

47 Flint, *The Rise of Magic*; Kaptein, *Muḥammad's Birthday Festival*, 76–96; Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet*, 118–19.

48 Both John the Baptist and Jesus were recognized as prophets in Islam.

49 "L'Apocalypse de Samuel Superiur de Deir-el-Qalamoun," Arabic, 379, French, 394–95; el-Leithy, "Coptic Culture and Conversion," 8–9; Zaborowski, "Egyptian Christians Implicating Chalcedonians"; Iskander, "Islamization in Medieval Egypt"; Décobert, "Sur l'Arabisation et l'Islamisation de l'Egypte"; Van Lent, "Les apocalypses coptes de l'époque arabe"; Nau, "Note sur l'Apocalypse de Samuel." The original context of the apocalypse seems to have been the Muslim conquest, although how long the text was composed after these events is difficult to ascertain. Nonetheless as Zaborowski points out, this text was extremely popular (see Zaborowski, Egyptian Christians Implicating Chalcedonians, " 109) and the manuscript from which the printed edition comes, the editor, J. Ziadeh, dates from the seventeenth century. See "L'Apocalypse de Samuel Superiur de Deir-el-Qalamoun," 374.

50 "L'Apocalypse de Samuel Superiur de Deir-el-Qalamoun," Arabic, 380, French, 395.

51 "L'Apocalypse de Samuel Superiur de Deir-el-Qalamoun," Arabic, 377–78, French, 393–94; Zaborowski, "Egyptian Christians Implicating Chalcedonians."

Later discussions of the dangers of too much mixing with Muslims relate to fears that such relations would lead or already had led to conversion to Islam.[52]

Some Jewish leaders were also very leery of changes to customs, liturgy or ritual practices that made Jewish praxis more similar to that of Muslims. At the same time, Jews from all levels of society were drawn to aspects of Muslim religious life, especially Sufism. Moses b. Maimon himself described Jews who prayed much of the night, fasted, avoided wine, meat, and intercourse with women, wore wool and hair garments and isolated themselves in the desert or mountains. While noting their pious intentions, he accused such individuals of imitating other religious communities.[53] Scholars have usually understood this passage as indicative of Jewish involvement with Sufism, even before Abraham, Maimonides' son, began his reforms to incorporate elements of Sufi practice into his own and other like-minded pietists.[54] It should be noted however, that Moses' description could as easily imply that some Jews were imitating the ascetic practices of Christians. Indeed, he uses the term *al-milal* (אלמלל/الملل), the plural of *millah* (ملة), meaning "religion" or "religious community," which suggests that he had the ascetics of both Muslim and Christian—the main non-Jewish religious traditions in Egypt at the time—ascetics in mind, i.e. Sufis and Christian monastics.[55]

The bulk of evidence for subsequent generations of aspiring Jewish ascetics/mystics in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt and Syria reveal a systematic appropriation of Sufi thought and practice by some Jews, including, but not exclusive to Abraham b. Maimon.[56] This process probably began before Abraham b. Maimon and certainly continued well beyond into the sixteenth century and in diverse regions such as al-Andalus and Yemen.[57] The era of Abraham Maimonides is particularly significant for the current discussion,

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52 el-Leithy, "Coptic Culture and Conversion," 130, 132–37. See discussion below.

53 Moses b. Maimon *Haqdamot*, Judeo-Arabic 381–84, Hebrew translation, 237–38.

54 Friedman, "Pietistic Criticism," esp. 256; Russ-Fishbane, *Judaism, Sufism, and Pietests*, 45–46.

55 Presumably he did not use the dual form in recognition that there were multiple communities/divisions of Christians and Muslims. On the relationship between Sufism and Shi'ism see Hermann and Terrier, eds., *Shi'i Islam and Sufism*. For additional indications of Jewish concerns about the imitation of Christians see Friedman, "Pietistic Criticism," esp. 259; Wieder, "Islamic Influences" esp. 75–78, 83–85.

56 Friedman, "Pietistic Criticism"; Russ-Fishbane, *Judaism, Sufism, and Pietests*; Goitein, "Abraham Maimonides and his Pietist Circle"; Cohen, "The Soteriology of R. Abraham Maimuni"; Wieder, "Islamic Influences."

57 The bibliography on Jewish "Sufis" is too vast to list comprehensively. However, see Fenton, "The Ritual Visualization"; Fenton, "La pratique de la retraite spirituelle"; Fenton, "Juifs et soufis en Égypte mamelouke"; Fenton, "A Mystical Commentary on the Song of Songs"; Fenton, "Influences soufies"; Fenton, "La 'hitbodetut'"; Fenton, "Judaeo-Arabic Mystical Writings of the XIIIth–XIVth centuries"; Tieche-Loubet, "Le courant mystique juif soufi"; Tieche-Loubet, "Le Piétisme soufi chez les Juifs d'Égypte au Moyen Age"; Lobel, *A Sufi–Jewish Dialogue*; Lobel, *Between Mysticism and Philosophy*; Langermann, "From Private Devotion to Communal Prayer"; Tanenbaum, "Of a Pietist Gone Bad"; Kraemer "The Andalusian Mystic ibn Hūd"; Vajda, "The Mystical Doctrine of Rabbi 'Obadyah"; Wieder, "Islamic Influences." On Jewish Sufis in early modern India see N. Katz, "The Identity of a Mystic." I do not mean to imply all expressions of Jewish "Sufism" were directly linked to one another in all regions, however.

however, because members of the Jewish community wrote to the Ayyubid Sultan, al-Malik al-ʿĀdil Sayf al-Dīn (1145–1218 CE), accusing Abraham of forcing new, non-Jewish prayer rituals and other practices on the Jewish community under his charge. We learn about the charge and some of Abraham's response in a letter by a supporter of the Palestinian liturgical rite.[58] The author of the letter, asserts that the *al-rais* (אלרייס)[59] "wrote an official report in Arabic that I, so-and-so, son of so-and-so, say that I voluntarily undertook in devotion to God and with bowings and prostration and prayer were supererogatory in my house and for myself and I did not force anyone with them and did not change anything about them in their synagogues."[60] This letter to the Sultan is an example of petitions to the state against "injustices" (*maẓālim*) studied by Marina Rustow, in particular, those addressing religious disagreements or implementation of innovation (*bidaʿ*).[61] As Paul Fenton and others have pointed out, however, unrelated to rituals related to Sufism, there were other instances in which Jewish communities petitioned Muslim authorities about alterations in the synagogue ritual, so that Abraham's advocated changes and his co-religionists' strategies of opposition need to be seen in the larger context of internal debates about proper conduct, liturgy and authority.[62] While the term "*bidaʿ*" is not directly evoked, the "*raʾīs*" emphasis that he did not change traditional practice, suggests a concern for this issue. He carefully counters such suspicions by emphasizing that he was engaging in supererogatory (*tanaffala* תנפל) prayer which was voluntary, and which was not imposed (*alzama* אלזם). The chosen vocabulary places his actions in the category of devotion understood and accepted in the context of Islamic worship, specifically Sufi practices, while at the same time insisting he did not change traditional practice.[63]

As Russ-Fishbane notes, Abraham b. Maimon refers to precisely such rituals, among others, in the context of accusations of imitating non-Jews, in both his *Kifāyat al-ʿābidīn* and his *responsa*. In a delightful sleight of hand, Abraham maintains that the Muslims had obtained and retained these practices from the Jews—if the rituals were no longer common among Jews, it is because they had allowed them to fall into disuse. Further-

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58 TS Ar. 51.111, partially transcribed in Goitein, "New Documents from the Cairo Geniza," 717, listed under Hirschfeld Boxes I, XV, 111. Fenton provides a French translation in his "Étude préliminaire," in *Deux traités*, 84–85. See discussions by Goitein there, and Friedman, "Complaint to the Sultan about Abraham b. R. Moses b. Maimon" and "Pietistic Criticism"; Russ-Fishbane, *Judaism, Sufism, and Pietests*, 144–46.

59 Abraham Maimonides is not mentioned by name in the letter.

60 אלרייס כתב מחצר באלערבי אקול אנא פלאן בן פלאן אנני תעברת בתעבד ללה ותנפל ברכוע וסגוד וצלוה פי ביתי ולנפסי לם אלזם בהא אחד ולא גירת עליהם פי כנאיסהם שי...; TS Ar. 51.111r, lines 11–13; Goitein, "New Documents from the Cairo Geniza," 717. Also see: Russ-Fishbane, *Judaism, Sufism, and Pietests*, 144; Fenton, "Étude préliminaire," in *Deux traités*, 85.

61 Rustow, "The Legal Status of *Dimmī-s* in the Fatimid East." For further bibliography see above, note 9.

62 See, for example, the Arabic letter at the end of TS Ar. 41.105, published in Fenton, "From East to West," esp. 20; Fenton, "Étude préliminaire," in *Deux traités*; Langermann, "From Private Devotion to Communal Prayer"; Friedman, "Opposition to Palestinian Prayer"; Wieder, "Islamic Influences."

63 Russ-Fishbane, *Judaism, Sufism, and Pietests*, 146–52; Wieder, "Islamic Influences."

more, Muslims, Christians and Karaites had many of the same fundamental principles, such as fasting and charity, and certain practices, such as the direction of prayer (in the case of Christians) as (Rabbanite) Jews, yet none suggest that these also be expunged from Jewish practice.[64] Thus all praiseworthy practices (in Abraham Maimonides' eyes) were original to Jewish devotion and any innovation or imitation was on the part of others, not the Jews. His suggested changes constituted a "restoration" of the original Jewish teaching; an argument that manipulated Muslim and Christian arguments that Jews had changed their scripture and practice, either for self-serving reasons or to confound the "true" prophecies and revelations of Christianity or Islam.[65] In Abraham's strategy, he admits that Jews had strayed from their original practices, and he attributes true practices to the Muslims (in this case the Sufis)—thus following Muslims' own assertions Islam's relationship to Judaism. By doing so, he pre-empts objections by Muslims or by his co-religionists who wished to draw Muslim authorities into the conflict, that his practices were innovations or problematic, since Muslims themselves are unwittingly co-opted as witnesses to the legitimacy of these practices and the ideas behind them. Abraham and his "Sufi-" oriented colleagues become champions of "restoring" "true" Judaism and bringing it closer to Islam. At the same time he manages to maintain Judaism's distinctiveness and claim to having the original, true revelation. The fact that he had to make such arguments, whether formally, as described in the cited letter, or within his own works, however, points to a substantial level of objections to these practices, specifically in the context of imitating non-Jews. Furthermore, the existence of other petitions to the Muslim government to resolve differences of ritual practice, demonstrate that Jews (and Christians) were familiar with and keen to manipulate Muslim opposition to "innovation" for their own ends.

Jewish leaders living in the Levant and Egypt did protest the attendance of Muslims or converts at "their" festivals in terms similar to their Muslim and Christian counterparts.[66] In an eleventh-century Jewish text from the Cairo Geniza, Jewish officials attempt to ban bringing any "sinner" (*poshe'a*), to the festivities at the synagogue of Moses at Dammuh, just outside of Cairo.[67] The "sinners" to which the text refers were probably Jewish converts to Islam, for texts in the Cairo Geniza, regularly use "*poshe'a*" to designate an "apostate."[68] The Muslim chronicler, al-Maqrīzī, writing much later in

64 Abraham b. Moses b. Maimon, *High Ways to Perfection*, 2: 222/223, 318/319, 320/321, 322/323, 324/325, 348/349; Russ-Fishbane, *Judaism, Sufism, and Pietests*, 152–54.

65 Resnick, "Falsification of Scripture"; Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*, 8–10, 19–49, 63–74. For an example of a later, Eastern Christian making such accusations against the Jews see Agapius, *Kitāb al-'Unwān*, PO, vol. 5, 581, 636–638, 645–646.

66 Kramer, "A Jewish Cult of the Saints." Also see discussion below.

67 TS. 20.117 line 15, published in Assaf, ed., *Texts and Studies in Jewish History*, 160–61, citation on 161.

68 Kramer, "A Jewish Cult of the Saints," esp. 584; Goitein *A Mediterranean Society*, 2:300–301, 591n4, 5:510n56; For another example, see, TS Box K 15.2v, line 7 cited and discussed in Cohen, *Poverty and Charity*, 152.

the fifteenth century mentions the attendance of Muslims at the same site.[69] Similar to what Tamer el-Leithy has found with many Coptic converts to Islam from the Ayyubid and especially Mamluk period, Jewish converts to Islam retained connections to their former communities, seemingly even several generations after the conversion. One may see this process quite clearly in the autobiographical poetic narrative of Moses b. Samuel, a Jewish secretary who had been compelled to convert to Islam by his Muslim overlord and then make pilgrimage to Mecca with his entourage. He returns to his family and attempts to evade working as a secretary, the better to avoid Muslim scrutiny. His poems leave no doubt that he considered his conversion a sin (though the greater share of blame he apportions to the Muslims who pressed him into changing his religion) and that he continued to regard himself a Jew, regardless of his new legal status.[70] Individuals such as Samuel, and his colleague, David ha-Cohen, another Jewish secretary against whom Muslim authorities turned, would have continued to be drawn to Dammuh and other Jewish pilgrimage sites and festivals as part of their (secret) continued Jewish identity. Indeed, when Samuel learned that he was summoned by his former employer for further service, he goes to pray again at the synagogue and the cave of Elijah, a site holy to Jews, but one which had long attracted pilgrims of other religious affiliations, including Christians, and later Muslims.[71] Muslims without Jewish ancestry may also have revered the place. Al-Maqrīzī explains that Muslims also accepted the traditions about the synagogue. He saw fit to recount some of the miracles associated with the bush at Dammuh and cuttings from it for his Muslim audience, which suggests that some Muslims felt the site's link to the prophet Moses to be genuine and therefore possessing some of the sanctity derived from such a connection.[72] This would have made the synagogue an attractive pilgrimage site for Muslims. Evidently some Jewish leaders were less comfortable than their congregants with bringing apostates/Muslims to the synagogue and its garden, feeling, perhaps, that allowing apostates to join in festivities was tantamount to condoning their choice, or that they in turn might draw their still-Jewish friends into Islam with them.[73]

The presence of apostates or Muslims at the synagogue was but one of many problems the letter writers found with activities there. According to the text, Jews, like the Muslims described by al-Ṭurṭūshī almost a hundred years later, not only mix with members of the opposite sex, or attractive members of the same sex, they also play games

69 al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 4:362–63; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 5:20–21.

70 Mann, "Moses b. Samuel, a Jewish Katib in Damascus." It is not clear exactly when these events took place. Mann dates the poems after the Fatimid period and connects them to Mamluk regulations prohibiting Jewish and Christian officials in government; see 158.

71 Mann, "Moses b. Samuel, a Jewish Katib in Damascus," esp. 166, 182. On the Cave of Elijah see Ovadiah and Pierri, *Elijah's Cave on Mount Carmel*.

72 al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 4:362–63. The bush was supposed to have been Moses' staff. When two Jews had illicit sex under one of its cuttings, the bush withered.

73 Since the document offers no clear explanation as to who these "poshe'a" were or why their presence was problematic, one cannot be certain of the reasons behind the objection to their presence.

with one another, dance, watch shadow plays—similar to the spectacles mentioned by al-Ṭurṭūshī—make beer, and eat special foods.[74] The problem with food or merry-making in this Jewish text is not that they make Jewish festivals resemble those of non-Jews, rather the writers seem to be worried for the "honour of the holy place" (*l-'ikrām al-muqaddas* לאכראם אלמקדש). Likewise, in the Coptic Christian chronicle, *History of the Patriarchs*, in a section describing practices from the late eleventh century, men and women are prohibited from mixing during either church services or festivals.[75] The mixing of men, women, and youths likewise impugned the reputation of the holy place, an issue that Muslims continued to decry in the Middle East. Ibn al-Ḥājj objected to cross-dressing and gender mixing on the fifteenth of Sha'bān, a day in which God decides who will die during the following year, and lamented cross-religious mixing that occurred on holidays during which Muslims treated their Christian neighbours as equals and exchanged greetings of peace, gifts, and food, including alcoholic beverages. According to him, Muslims listened to what the Jews said of Muḥammad, and Muslim men went shopping among the Christians at their wives urging. All such behaviour he condemned as *bida'* and imitations of the *dhimmi*.[76] The Damascene historian and anti- *bida'* author, Abū Shamah (1203–1268 CE), likewise complained vociferously about the degree of mixing between men and women during the festival of mid-Sha'bān, even citing al-Ṭurṭūshī to support his contention that such behaviour constituted *bida'*.[77] Cross-dressing and same-sex love were both regularly associated with festivals of all kinds. In a much discussed passage from al-Maqrīzī describing Nawrūz, "effeminates" (*al-mukhannathūn* or in other versions *al-mu'nathūn*) or "musicians" (*al-mughanūn*), depending upon the version, and loose women (*al-fāsaqāt*) congregate beneath the Caliph's palace, play music, drink beer, and have water fights.[78] The activities described in this passage, from water games to beer drinking, are very similar to those to which the leaders of the synagogue at Dammuh objected. The prohibition in the Jewish text that men should not accompany

74 TS. 20.117 lines 13–29 in *Texts*, 161. Kramer, "A Jewish Cult of the Saints"; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 5:20–24; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 222–24.

75 HOPC, vol. 2, pt. 3 *Christodoulus-Michael 1046–1102*, Arabic, 166, English, 250–51.

76 Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal*, 1:312, 2:46–51. Compare with Ibn Jubayr, *Riḥlat,* 109–111; Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr,*142–144 On the fifteenth of Sha'bān, or Mid- Sha'bān one should fast and pray for the dead; however, often this holiday is also celebrated by preparing special foods, ostensibly for the dead, and other festive activities. On this festival, see Grunebaum, *Muhammadan Festivals,* 53–54; Kister, "'Sha'bān Is My Month.'" Sometimes on the evening before the fifteenth of Sha'bān the prayers of desirable gifts (*ṣalāt al-raghā'ib*), another contested practice, were also recited. See Ukeles, "Innovation or Deviation," 239–97.

77 Abū Shamah, *al-Bā 'ith,* 34–41. He mentions al-Ṭurṭūshī on 39. On the fifteenth of Sha'bān, or Mid-Sha'bān one should fast and pray for the dead; however, often this holiday is also celebrated by preparing special foods, ostensibly for the dead, and other festive activities. On this festival, see Grunebaum, *Muhammadan Festivals*, 53–54; M. J. Kister, "'Sha'bān Is My Month.'"

78 al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:442; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ* (1970) 1:269. For discussion of this passage and similar ones see: Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo,* 43, 46, 49, 112n28; Lutfi, "Coptic Festivals of the Nile," esp. 278–279. On "effeminates" also see Rowson, "The Categorization of Gender and Sexual Irregularity in Medieval Arabic Vice lists," in *Body Guards*; Rowson, "The Effeminates in Early Medina,". For more references and discussion see Chap. 3.

"a youth and no man that is young unless he is related to h[im]…and no one should risk an action that would cause a rumour," hints that same-sex liaisons at festivals were a concern within the Jewish community as well.[79] Young men or male youths were considered sexually attractive to other men; within the Islamic world men's attraction to other men, especially young ones, was considered natural, although acting upon it was prohibited by Islamic law.[80] In this Geniza text the leaders writing the letter seem to be concerned that the pairing of a young man with an older one might cause scandalous rumours, presumably of a sexual relationship between them.[81] This anxiety on the part of the Jewish officials and continued protestations by late medieval Muslim authors also suggest that the strong association between illicit sexual encounters and festivals that characterized Muslim descriptions of attendance at Christian festivals and monasteries during the Umayyad and early Abbasid period expanded to include festivals of *any* religious origin—Jewish and Muslim, as well as Christian.[82]

The parallels between this Jewish text and later Muslim ones from both Iberia and the Middle East are quite striking. Furthermore, like the Iberian *ḥisba* texts, this Genizah letter suggests that some members of the, in this case, Jewish, leadership took participation by members of another religious community as a matter of course. Nor did they appear disturbed by the merriment or easy mixing of men and women. While the authors of the letter were clearly appalled, they wrote from a distance. They had heard rumour of these events and felt obliged to intervene to dictate appropriate behaviour.[83] Jews nearby, including the synagogue leaders, had evidently felt no such compunction, although they did accept the proposed reforms.[84]

The activities cantered around the synagogue of Moses at Dammuh fall between the categories of festival and *ziyāra*.[85] The synagogue was a destination for *ziyāra* because

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79 צביאן ולא רגל מא צבי לאלא אן יתעלק בה[ם… .ואן לא יתעדא אנסאן לא רגול ולא ואמרה אלי […. . . TS. 20. 117 lines 20–21. Also see Kramer's discussion in "A Jewish Cult of the Saints."

80 El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic world*, 25–51; Wright and Rowson, eds., *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*; Murray and Roscoe, *Islamic Homosexualities*, 55–96, 142–157; Rosenthal, "Ar-Razi on the Hidden Illness." In this last piece and the accompanying primary source male attraction to other men is treated as a disease with varying hopes of a cure.

81 Compare with Leo Africanus, *Cosmographia de l'Affrica*, 311–12; Giovanni Leone Africano, *Description d'Afrique*, 1:222 where Sufi festivities were assumed to lead to sexual liaisons between older Sufi men and their younger male disciples. On the theme of contemplating the beauty of young men as a path to the divine within Sufism, see El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic world*, 37–39, 96–110.

82 For a discussion of this issue see Chapter 3.

83 TS. 20.117 lines 1–10 in *Texts*, 160.

84 Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society,* 5:21.

85 These are not necessarily distinct, separate events. People frequently went on *ziyāra* to the tomb or shrine of a holy person on the person's death/birth day and participated in his/her *mawlīd*, which often constituted a festival in its own right. Mayeur-Jaouen, *Pèlerinages d'Égypte*, 20–21; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 1:123; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 60–65. Not all *ziyāra* involved a *mawlīd* or other kind of festival, and not all festivals involved *ziyāra* or were *mawālid* (pl. of *mawlīd*) however.

it was dedicated to a particular holy person—the prophet Moses—and people made pilgrimage there, especially on the seventh day of Adar, the anniversary of Moses' death. However, the special rituals and even the timing of pilgrimage were also related to a particular festival—*Shavu'ot*.[86] Al-Maqrīzī describes it as a pilgrimage festival for the Jews during the month of Sivan, which is indeed when *Shavu'ot* is celebrated. He states that the holiday marks the giving of the Torah to the prophet Moses. Thus, the synagogue's close association with Moses implies that Jews conducted special celebrations there focused during *Simḥat Torah* as well, which would make sense given that Moses was and is, of course, associated with the giving of the Torah.[87] Its classification is largely immaterial, however, for the "misbehaviours" described in the letter were commonly associated with both *ziyāra* and numerous festivals. Gravesites of the holy dead, like festivals, were so strongly associated with sexual misbehaviour, and women's misbehaviour in particular, that in his erotic manual, the thirteenth-century Tunisian author, Aḥmad al-Tīfāshī, chose a graveyard as the scene for a sexual encounter between two women.[88] The potential for illicit sexual liaisons, the frequency with which women travelled without male family members for a local *ziyāra*, and the custom of setting up markets, privies, and picnicking at cemeteries all occasioned censure by legalists from al-Andalus to Egypt. Because of the strong association with sexual impropriety, these legalists frequently singled out women in particular for censure or special scrutiny, or they simply forbade women from participating in funerals or performing *ziyāra*.[89]

Correct behaviour toward the dead and at gravesites had long been a source of contention among Muslims.[90] In contrast to both Muslims and their co-religionists in Christian-ruled Europe, Rabbinate Jewish leaders were not particularly anxious about the ceremonies, legality of pilgrimage or manner of intercession sought at gravesites of the holy dead. Drawing in part from the injunction in BT Sanhedrin 65b against visiting graves for the purpose of divination, in his *Mishnah Torah* Moses b. Maimon pro-

86 Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 1:96, 5:19, 20–24.

87 al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 4:362–63.

88 Aḥmad al-Tīfāshī, *Nuzhat al-Albāb*, 238–241; Aḥmad al-Tīfāshī, *Les Délices des Coeurs*, 266–72. On this text and same sex love between women see Sahar Amer, *Crossing Borders*, 34–37, 43–49.

89 al-Jarsīfī, *Risālah*, 121–23; al-Jarsīfī, "Traités de *Ḥisba*,", esp. 367–70; Ibn 'Abdūn, *Risālah*, Arabic, 26–28, Spanish, 96–98; al-Wansharīsī, *Mi'yār*, 6:419–20 (my thanks to the late Prof. Olivia Remie Constable of the University of Notre Dame for this reference); Ibn al-Ḥājj, *al-Madkhal*, 1:250–51, 267–70, 290–91; Abū Shamah, *al-bā'ith*, 94; Ibn Taymīya, *Kitab iqtiḍā'*; *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 263–64; al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-lum'a*, 1:214–19; al-Subkī, *Shifā' al-Siqām*, 83–84, 126; Langner, *Untersuchungen*, 22, 32–33, 36–37, 58; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 5:21–23; Lutfi, "Manners and Customs"; Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo*, 17, 43, 46, 49; Cornell, *Realm of the Saint*, 249; Meri, "The Etiquette of Devotion in the Islamic Cult of the Saints"; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 128; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 58, 77, 93–95, 200–201, 211–212. Efforts to curtail women's participation in funeral corteges were partially successful, at least in Morocco; Leo Africanus reports that women did not generally join the funeral procession, even if the deceased were a close family member, though women did have other funeral rites. Leo Africanus, *Cosmographia de l'Affrica*, 301–2; Leo Africanus, *Description de l'Afrique*, 1:213.

90 Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 36–37, 119–38, 144–46, 151–55, 172–79. See Chapters 2 and 3 for a discussion of early attitudes toward death and prayer at gravesites.

hibited sleeping in graveyards in order to communicate with demons, however, he did not condemn remaining at tombs or communicating with the dead outright.[91] Muslim authors from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries remained very concerned about the treatment of the dead and behaviour in cemeteries, including what types of prayer or contemplation were acceptable at gravesites; they often dedicated entire chapters of their works to these subjects.[92] Versions of ḥadīth cursing either Jews or Christians or both for making places of worship at the graves of their prophets that abounded in standard ḥadīth collections and were regularly cited by authors of anti-*bida'* tractates.[93] Visiting graves or other types of shrines associated with prophets or holy individuals in order to request their intercession imitated the Jews, Christians, Magians, and idolaters.[94] Ibn Taymiyya, in addition to attributing such behaviours to non-Muslims, went a step further and blamed the Fāṭimds and the *Rāfiḍah*, a term, which in its most basic form means "rejector" but which became connected to Twelver Shi'as, associating these "freethinkers of unbelief" (*zanādiqah kuffār* زنادقة كفار) with the unbelief and lies of Jews, Christians, and/or Zoroastrians in their encouragement of and participation in *ziyāra*.[95] He asserted:

> And the people of knowledge, all of them know that they (the Fāṭimids and the Rāfiḍites) are not from the son of Fāṭimah, rather they are from the progeny of the Magians. And it is said, from the progeny of the Jews…Secretly their law is a composite of the law of the Magians and the Sabeans.[96]

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91 Moses b. Maimon, *Mishnah Torah*, "hilkhot 'avodat kokhavim" chap. 11, law 13. Horowitz, "Speaking to the Dead." On this, also see Chapter 1.

92 al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-lum'a*, 1:214–29; Ibn Taymīya, *Kitab iqtiḍā'*, 306–407; *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 283–306; Ibn al-Ḥājj, *al-Madkhal*, 1:250–70; al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* [*Kitāb Dhikr al-mawt wa-mā ba'da*] 5:35–170; al-Ghazzālī, *The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife*.

93 al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 1, bk. 8, nos. 426–427, vol. 2, bk. 23, no. 1330, no. 1341, vol. 4, bk. 60, nos. 3453–3454, vol. 5, bk. 64, nos. 4443–4444, vol. 7 bk. 77, nos. 5815–5816; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, vol. 3 Kitāb al-Janā'iz (Book of Funerals) no. 3227; Malik, *Muwaṭṭa*, bk. 9, 9.24.88; Malik, *Muwaṭṭa* (Arabic), Kitāb Qasr al-Ṣalāh, 75; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 2, Kitāb al-masājid wa mawāḍ' al-ṣalāt (Book of Mosques and Places of Prayer) nos. 1181, 1184, 1185, 1186, 1187; Ibn Taymīya, *Kitab iqtiḍā'*, 322–23, 332–33, 373; *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 260, 264, 292; Ibn Taymīya, *Majmū'*, 27:460–61; al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-lum'a*, 1:216; al-Subkī, *Shifā' al-Siqām*, 129, 136; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Ighāthat al-lahfān*, 192–94, 199, 203, 596; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 130–32; Olesen, *Culte des Saints*, 129–31.

94 Ibn Taymīya, *Kitab iqtiḍā'*, 332–36, 344–45, 375, 383, 439–43, 458; *Ibn Taīmiya's Struggle*, 264–66, 273, 299, 320–21, 325 ; Ibn Taymīya, *Majmū'*, 27:72, 130, 145, 159, 161–62, 172–73, 460–61, 464; al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-lum'a*, 1:216; Ibn al-Ḥājj, *al-Madkhal*, 1:251; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Ighāthat al-lahfān*, 190–205, 213–25, 525; al-Subkī, *Shifā' al-Siqām* 126–130, 136; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 177–90, 213; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 131–34; Olesen, *Culte des saints,* 55–58, 114–15, 128, 131–32, 153–54.

95 Ibn Taymīya, *Majmū'*, 27:161, 167, 174; Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew*, 100–103. On the *Rāfiḍah*, see *EI*, "*al-Rāfiḍa*"; Kohlberg, "The Term 'al-Rāfiḍa'"; Y. Friedman, *The Nuṣayrī-Alawīs*, 198, 235.

96 و أهل العلم كلهم يعلمون أنهم لم يكونوا من ولد فاطمة: بل كانوا من ذرية المجوس, و قيل من ذرية يهودي ... باطن دينهم مركب من دين المجوس و الصابئين.; Ibn Taymīya, *Majmū'* 27:174–75. Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 178.

Slightly later in the paragraph he states that their law comes from that of the Muslims, the Jews, and the Christians, and that philosophers are similar to them.[97]

By reminding their readers of ḥadīth which cursed Jews and Christians for venerating the graves of prophets, writers of anti-*bida'* tracts sought to demonstrate that, either explicitly or implicitly, any Muslim who followed their ways, were similarly cursed by God. By placing Muslims who adopted these practices in the same category as Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians, these authors suggest that such Muslims are outside the community of true believers and, therefore, the blessings of God and the Prophet Muḥammad. Ibn Taymiyya singles out Shi'i Muslims not only as imitators of *dhimmi*, but as their literal descendants. In so doing, he not only denies their status as Muslims, he repudiates their lofty claim of being descendants of the Prophet, replacing it instead with a comparatively shameful lineage of subjugated peoples. Lest any assume that the Shi'i were merely misguided, Ibn Taymiyya insinuates their nefarious intent by saying that *secretly* their law is a composite of that of the Zoroastrians and "Sabeans."[98] Presumably, were the so-called derivative nature of their law not shameful, they would have no need to hide it. That they do so implies that they know, or knew when they were in power, that they did wrong, and continued nevertheless, leading Muslims who were unaware of the origins of the Fatimids or their law to do likewise. According to Ibn Taymiyya's rhetoric, therefore, those who follow their ways are either ignorant or liars and bad Muslims. Ibn Taymiyya makes these claims, presumably to refute Shi'i Muslims still living in the Levant and Egypt, especially in the aftermath of the Fatimids' loss of power, and to counter those who continued to follow customs established or encouraged by the Fatimid regime. Indeed, certain parts of Syria, such as the city of Aleppo, remained predominantly Shi'i throughout the Middle Ages. Graves of holy individuals revered by Shi'a and Sunni alike proliferated during and after the crusading period, and received Ayyubid and even occasionally Mamluk sponsorship, a state of affairs Ibn Taymiyya must have found frustrating in the extreme.[99] Yet his real target is not the Shi'i per se, but rather what he considers to be the wrong kind of *ziyāra*.[100] *Ziyāra* that involved building mosques or fancy mausoleums over gravesites, or of going to graves of the holy dead in order to supplicate God or the saints directly, was derived from the practices of Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Shi'i, all of which, by the time Ibn Taymiyya finished depicting them,

97 Ibn Taymīya, *Majmū'* 27:175.

98 "Sabeans" were a pre-Islamic people of Yemen, however, from the ninth-century CE onwards Muslim writers also used this term to designate a number of religious groups, such as the Marcionites and Mazdakites, among others, whom Muslims deemed "heretics" "zindiqs." Chokr, *Zandaqa et Zindīqs*, 48. On early history of the Sabeans see: Korotayev, *Pre-Islamic Yemen*, 73–155.

99 Mulder, *The Shrines of the 'Alids*, 4–8, 11, 13, 20–21, 64–113, 117, 141–45, 161–62, 177, 251–66. On Fatimid use of festivals to create community across confessional lines see Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City*, esp. 79–82.

100 Most authors, even Ibn Taymiyya, regarded certain kinds of visitation of gravesites as acceptable, even praiseworthy. Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 130–34; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 172–94.

were clearly far from Muslim law and based on deception.[101] The negative traits attributed to Fatimids, Rāfidites, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Jews by extension applied to Muslims embarking on this kind of *ziyāra*.

Just as Jewish community leaders found the presence of apostates/Muslims undesirable at the synagogue of Dammuh, a number of Muslim religious thinkers in the Middle East saw Muslim attendance at or imitation of Christian or Jewish festivals as a threat to Islam. These authors are more explicit as to why. Ibn Taymiyya specifies:

> Resembling them in some of their holidays might give them a chance to rejoice in the falsity that exists in their hearts. This is especially true when they are vanquished under humiliation of *jizya* and insignificance. For then they would think the Muslims have become their subsidiaries in some elements of their law. This bring their hearts strength and joy. This might even make them covet to avail themselves of an opportunity and to hold the weak in contempt. And this is also a clear command a rational person would not doubt. How can one participate in something that leads to honouring them needlessly, whilst one is rather enjoined to hold them in disdain?[102]

Indeed, as we have seen, this interpretation is precisely the one which many western pilgrims to the Islamic world and Christians and Jews living under Muslim rule adopted when confronted with the presence of Muslims at festivals and shrines which they considered "theirs." Ibn Taymiyya and other Muslims' objections to "shared" festivals remained a mixture of protestations against violated hierarchies and potential sexual misconduct. Regarding Palm Sunday (*'īd al-zaytūnah*), Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 1336 CE) complained:

> And this is what some of the Muslims do on one of the festivals of the Copts which is called *'īd al-zaytūnah* [Palm Sunday]. On this day the Christians enter a place called *al-Maṭarīyah* to a well there named the well of Balsam; it is very well known there. On that day a great crowd gathers, many from the Copts and non-Copts from many lands they come to bathe in its water. Then some of the Muslims do that and they rush to it like what the Christians do, and they bathe themselves for their ablution and they uncover for this most [of their bodies?] And this is what was mentioned previously about uncovering arousing parts glorifying the festival of the people of the book as [mentioned] before. And this increases [so] that women, men and elderly travel to it from distant places and they assemble there and they uncover inside it as outside it. And in their gathering [there are] scandalous deeds as previously stated. But this is an increase

101 For a discussion of the degree to which Fatimids were indeed responsible for building mausoleums see Taylor, "Reevaluating the Shi'i Role."

102 مشابهتهم فى بعض أعيادهم توجب سرور قلوبهم بماهم عليه من الباطل, خصوصا اذا كانوا مقهورين تحت ذل الجزية و الصغار. فانهم يرون المسلمين قد صاروا فرعا لهم فى خصائص دينهم. فان ذلك يوجب قوة قلوبهم و انشراح صدورهم. وربما أطمعهم ذلك فى انتهاز الفرص و استذلال الضعفاء. و هذا أيضا أمر محسوس لا يستريب فيه عاقل فكيف يجتمع ما يقتضى اكرامهم بلا موجب, مع شرع الصغار فى حقهم؟ Ibn Taymīya, *Kitab iqtiḍā'*, 219; *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 216. My translation differs slightly from Memon's.

> of another scandalous matter and it is that the *dhimmi* woman looks at the body of a Muslim woman. And it is forbidden. The *'ulamā'* forbade it, may God have mercy on them. Furthermore even if bathing in this water were permitted, it is done but in a time different than their gathering.[103]

Ibn al-Ḥājj was upset by the breakdown of decorum and distance which was supposed to mark *dhimmi*–Muslim relations. He, along with other authors, voiced similar objections to the donning of scanty clothing that then became transparent during the customary water-fights during Nawrūz—originally the Persian New Year, but in Egypt the celebration of the rise of the Nile.[104] Yet while (near) nudity was certainly one of Ibn al-Ḥājj's objections to the rituals surrounding *'īd al-zaytūnah*, especially in a gathering of men and women, his primary trouble is that Muslims come together with the Christians in this festive bathing.[105] That the shared timing rather than the bathing, mixed or otherwise, is at issue is evident in Ibn al-Ḥājj's grudging admission at the end of the passage that bathing in the pool might be allowed at other times when Christians were not celebrating their holiday. Ibn al-Ḥājj finds Christians and Muslims bathing together scandalous because this activity allowed Christian women see the bodies of Muslim ones, namely to view the shameful or vulnerable parts of a Muslim woman's body, thus violating Muslim–*dhimmi* hierarchy. This concern that bathing in particular was a locus of inappropriate mixing, because there was no way of differentiating Muslims from Jews and Christians when naked, was an ongoing one. Rulers attempted to mitigate the situation by requiring Christians and Jews to wear some kind of distinguishing clothing, such as a necklace or coloured turban in the bathhouse, measures that seem to have been observed only sporadically.[106]

Elsewhere in his text, Ibn al-Ḥājj laments that Muslims treat their Christian neighbours as equals and exchange greetings of peace, gifts, and food, including alcoholic beverages, listen to what the Jews say of Muḥammad, and that Muslim women urge

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103 و من ذلك ما يفعله بعض المسلمين فى أحد أعياد القبط الذى يسمونه عيد الزيتونة فتخرج النصارى فى ذلك اليوم فى موضع يقال له المطرية الى بئر هناك تسمى بئر البلسم و هى معروفة مشهورة. فيجتمع اليها فى ذلك اليوم فى الغالب جمع كثير من القبط و غيرهم من بلاد كثيرة يأتون اليها للغسل من مائها. ثم أن بعض المسلمين يفعلون ذلك و يهرعون اليه كما تفعل النصارى و يغتسلون كغسلهم و ينكشفون لذلك فى الغالب. وهذا فيه ما تقدم ذكره من كشف العورات و تعظيم مواسم أهل الكتاب كما تقدم. ويزيد هذا أنهم يسافرون اليها من المواضع البعيدة نساء و رجالا و شبانا و يجتمعون هناك و ينهتكون فيه كغيره. و فى اجتماعهم من المفاسد ما تقدم ذكره. لكن فى هذا زياد مفسدة أخرى وهى نظر الذمية الى جسد المسلمة و هو حرام و قد منعه العلماء رحمة الله عليهم . هذا و ان كان الغسل من ذلك الماء مباحا فعله لكن فى غير وقت اجتماعهم و فى التلويح ما يغنى عن التصريح.; Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal*, 2:59–60. Both Ibn al-Ḥājj and Ibn Taymiyya complain about similar behaviour during *'id al-Ghiṭās* (Epiphany); *Al-Madkhal*, 2:59; Ibn Taymīya, *Kitāb iqtiḍā'*, 227; *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 222. Also see Chapter 4 for evidence in Christian legal sources for Muslim water celebrations or "baptism."

104 Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal*, 2:50–51; Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-luma*, 1:93; Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo*, pp. 43, 46; Langner, *Untersuchungen*, 36. Also, see above.

105 The passage implies that men and women bathed in the pool separately, since Ibn al-Ḥājj only mentions women seeing other women's bodies, not women and men seeing one another's bodies.

106 Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal*, 2:172; al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-ḥawādith wa-al-bida'*, 142; Arabic text and translation also excerpted in Melville and Ubaydli, eds. *Christians and Moors in Spain*, 3:120–21; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 5:43, 96–99; Cuffel, "Polemicizing Women's Bathing"; Grotzfeld, *Das Bad*.

their husbands to go shopping among the Christians, a request that the husbands readily oblige.[107] Muslims were not merely inadvertently violating the proper hierarchy between themselves and *dhimmi*, they were actively encouraging these behaviours. Idrīs ibn Baidakīn al-Turkumānī (late thirteenth/early fourteenth century CE), a Ḥanafī jurist from Egypt, fiercely opposed Muslim participation in Christian and, to a lesser extent Jewish festivals, including casual exchanges of food during them. In his *Kitāb al-luma'*, he warns against Muslims tasting or even nibbling the food of Christians during their festivals.[108] Al-Turkumānī further describes what "the wicked Muslim" (المسلم الخبيث) would do on the day known as "*mīlād*" (Christmas): "He buys for his children sugar cane, wax [candles], basket[s], firewood or something similar to it and tosses [it] in the fire."[109] Ibn Taymiyya similarly complains that:

> Many of the people (Muslims) begin like that Thursday which is for the unbeliever, the festival of the Table (Maundy Thursday)—another Thursday on the fast of the Christians which they call the Great Thursday, and it is the vile Thursday—to congregate in large gathering places. And they color eggs, cooking milk, mark their riding-beasts with red. They prepare foods such as they would hardly prepare during the festival of God and his Prophet, and they exchange gifts that you do during the pilgrimage season.[110]

Slightly earlier, he specifies that Christians and Muslims do these activities for their children.[111] Here, and in a number of the other examples provided so far, many of the "shared" activities during non-Muslim festivals might be attributed to mere desire to join "a good party" or to provide enjoyment for children. Ibn Taymiyya even allowed for such motivations when he described Muslims making lavish preparations in food, clothing and games for these festivals "without attaching any religious significance to the new customs."[112] Yet these authors also describe shared rituals that would have been recognized as having significant religious weight as well.

In Egypt and the Levant, Muslim and Jewish leaders alike bewailed Muslim and Jewish women's imitation of one another's customs surrounding menstruation and purifi-

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107 Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal*, 2:46–51.

108 Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-luma'*, 1:295. Overall he was substantially less interested in Jews and their influence on Muslims, however; see ibid. 1:301, 308, 309. For an introduction to his overall approach to *bida'*, see Ukeles, "Innovation or Deviation," 108–9.

109 فيشترى لاولاده القصب, و الشمع , و القفص , و الحطب أو ما يناسبه و يطرح فى النار.; Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-luma'*, 1:293. قصب, translated here as "sugar cane," can also mean "gold and silver thread" or "reeds." On the dating of al-Turkumānī see Labib's introduction, 15–16.

110 كثيرا من الناس صاروا فى مثل هذا الخميس الذى هو عند الكفار عيد المائدة—اخر خميس فى صوم النصارى الذى يسمونه الخميس الكبير, و هو الخميس الحقير—يجتمعون فى أما كن اجتماعات عظيمة. ويصبغون البيض , و يطبخون اللبن, و ينكتون بالحمرة دوابهم. و يصطنعون الاطعمة التى لا تكاد تفعل فى عيد الله و رسوله, و يتهادون الهدايا التى تكون فى مثل مواسم الحج.; Ibn Taymīya, *Kitāb iqtiḍā'*, 215; *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 213. For a discussion of the Festival of the Table see the previous page in Ibn Taymiyya's text and also Memon's translation, 358n249.

111 Ibn Taymīya, *Kitāb iqtiḍā'*, 214; *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 212.

112 غير أن يتعبدوا بتلك العادة المحدثة; Ibn Taymīya, *Kitāb iqtiḍā'*, 209; *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 207. This passage is quoted in fuller form in the introduction.

cation thereafter.[113] Muslims had to be reminded not to adopt the practices of Jews or Christians on their respective Sabbaths.[114] Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyya lists activities forbidden to Jews during the Sabbath, such as hunting or digging trenches and chides Muslims for avoiding these on the Sabbath like the Jews.[115] Ibn al-Ḥājj complains that Muslim women do not buy or eat fish on the Sabbath, nor will they allow it in their house. This, according to Ibn al-Ḥājj, is a peculiarity of the Jews who do not catch fish on the Sabbath, allow it in their houses, or eat it.[116] His statement is curious, since there is no legal reason for Jews to refrain from fish on the Sabbath. Assuming his description of both Jewish and Muslim practice is correct, I suspect that local Jews had adopted the custom of eschewing fish on the Sabbath (which would begin on Friday evening) in order to avoid any similarity between themselves and Christian communities who could eat fish but not meat on Fridays.[117] Ironically, some Muslims seem to have imitated a Jewish custom designed to differentiate themselves from one of the other religious communities. In turn, Ibn al-Ḥājj sought to distinguish Muslims from Jews and condemned imitating Jewish alimentary practice as *bida'*.

In a lengthy discussion of *'Āshūrā'*, Ibn Taymiyya dwells upon the reputed Jewish origins of the holiday.[118] Similar to his strategy when refuting the validity of certain kinds of *ziyāra*, in his collection of fatāwā, Ibn Taymiyya, holds not only Jews and other people of the book accountable for the origin and perpetration of "wrong" customs during the festival, he also blames the Shi'i.[119] Lest his readers doubt the condemnable nature of some of the practices surrounding *'Āshūrā'*, he also associates them with "satans" and *dajjāl*, the Muslim equivalent of the Antichrist.[120] Linking festivals with "satans" or the *dajjāl* in combination with *dhimmi* or Shi'i added a demonic element to these customs, and,

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113 Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal*, 1:279; Moses b. Maimon, *Teshuvot ha-Rambam*, 436–41; TS 8 J 33 in Mann, *Jews in Egypt and Palestine*, 2:304–5, doc. 3; Cuffel, "Call and Response." Menstruation was an important religious issue for both Muslim and Jewish women for it affected when and what religious rituals they could perform and whether or not they could have sexual relations with their spouses. Fonrobert, *Menstrual Purity*; Marienberg, *Niddah*; Katz, *Body of the Text*, 192–203.

114 Ibn Taymīya, *Kitāb iqtiḍā'*, 135, 196–98, 262–67; *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 176, 202, 228–29.

115 Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Ighāthat al-lahfān*, 595, 598.

116 Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal*, 1:279.

117 Copts, for example fasted on Fridays and Wednesdays, but could eat fish on those days, although fish was prohibited on the Fast of Jonah, the Fast of Our Lady and Lent. "Fasting" in *Coptic Encyclopedia*.

118 Ibn Taymīya, *Majmū'*, 25:310–11, however, also see 303, 309 where he blames *dhimmi* more generally for incorrect practices during *'Āshūrā'*. Compare with Ibn Taymīya, *Kitāb iqtiḍā'*, 86–87, 171–77, 214; *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 150–51, 186–89, 212–13. The entire discussion of *'Āshūrā'* may be found in *Majmū'*, 25:300–332. While in this volume he is more preoccupied with festivals, it should be noted that he continues to criticize *ziyāra* and to link it with Christian and Jewish practices. Contrast his discussion of *'Āshūrā'* with that of Ibn al-Ḥājj, who also discusses the festival, but without emphasizing a non-Muslim origin for it. Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal*, 1:289–91.

119 Ibn Taymīya, *Majmū'*, 25:301–2. Compare with Ibn Taymīya, *Kitāb iqtiḍā'*, 300–301; *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 247–48.

120 Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'*, 25: 301, 314–315, 322.

presumably to their practitioners. This demonization would have served as a greater deterrent than simply connecting the festivals with more human, Christians, Jews, or Shi'i, non- or "wrong" Muslims to Sunnis, who were, potentially, their neighbours, partners, and friends.

These brief indications suggest that Muslims did have some common rituals and share reverence for or come together with Jews on some of their holy days, namely the Sabbath and possibly *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement), which continued to be associated with *'Āshūrā'*.[121] The latter is less clear, since not all anti-*bida'* authors relate it to Judaism, and Ibn Taymiyya seems to have wanted to bring together all negative associations possible, of which the festival's original connection to Judaism was but one. Nevertheless, as with the Sabbath, his concern that Muslims might be treating the day as holy at the same time as the Jews implies that some Muslims were following a Jewish "calendar" and perhaps continuing to assign some of the same significance to the day as did Jews. For the most part, however, Muslim writers of anti-*bida'* treatises focused their energies on Christian festivals and holy places; they occasionally singled out Jews or Zoroastrians, but more often these are included in broad admonitions to avoid adopting the rites of the people of the book.

Less clear is whether visiting churches during Christian holidays was common in the Middle East during the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods. Ibn Taymiyya quotes an earlier source, ultimately going back to Ibn Hanbal (780–855 CE), to argue against attending Christian and Jewish festivals, but also to indicate that Muslims may buy goods at the fairs attached to such festivals as long as they do not enter churches or synagogues.[122] Accidental encounters with churches, or going to churches or monasteries in order to buy goods and nothing else are acceptable.[123] His decision to delineate under what circumstances Muslims could enter the religious buildings of non-Muslims was presumably an effort to address Muslims in thirteenth or early fourteenth-century Syria who were going into churches (or synagogues). Some of these, it seems, were attending non-Muslim festivals in the process, much as their earlier Andalusian or Maghribi co-religionists were. Ibn Taymiyya's care to clarify that economic motives for visiting places of *dhimmi* worship remained licit also suggests that these institutions, in particular Christian monasteries and churches, continued to be important centres of commerce the use of which even the most stringently minded Muslims were loath to abandon.[124] Thus, the Muslim practice of visiting monasteries or churches in order to obtain supplies, or hospitality described by some of the Christian and Muslim sources discussed in the previous chapter, was within the limits of what Ibn Taymiyya considered acceptable.

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121 On the association of *'Āshūrā'* with the Day of Atonement see *EI*, "*'Āshūrā'*"; Fierro, "Celebration of 'Āšūrā' in Sunni Islam." Compare with Meshullam ben Menahem de Volterra's assertion that Muslims observed the Ninth of Av, discussed in Chapter 4.

122 Ibn Taymīya , *Kitāb iqtiḍā'*, 199–202; *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 203–4; Chrysostomides, "'There Is No Harm in It.'"

123 Ibn Taymīya , *Kitāb iqtiḍā'*, 227–28, 337; *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 222–23, 267.

124 On the commercial importance of monasteries in the early Islamic period see Campbell, "A Heaven of Wine," 9, 15, 26, 39–40, 46–47, 123.

Entering religious buildings of other groups, as so many Muslims clearly did, whether to join the service, or because they were drawn by the beauty of the building or curiosity was, however, beyond the pale for Ibn Taymiyya.

In the longest discussion of churches and synagogues, much of Ibn Taymiyya's energies in this section are focused the condemnation of participation in *dhimmi* holidays or conversing primarily in a language other than Arabic. At first glance, the use of languages other than Arabic may seem unrelated to attendance at non-Muslim places of worship. Yet as el-Leithy has shown, during this period fluency or even miraculous knowledge of a religious community's language was seen by Muslims and by Coptic and potentially other Christians as important indicators of the truth or failure of religious as well as cultural affiliation.[125] In his treatise, Ibn Taymiyya emphasizes the symbolic power of language to create identity between peoples and the possibility that Muslims might be prompted to use Hebrew or Syriac incantations without knowing their meaning and therefore say something forbidden.[126] At the beginning of his discussion he provides a quotation attributed to 'Umar which juxtaposes foreign language acquisition with entering churches: "Beware the jabber (رطانة- *raṭānah*) of the non-Arabs and take care that you do not enter with the associators into their churches on their festival days."[127] Several issues seem to be feeding Ibn Taymiyya's concerns. Given earlier indications of Muslim fascination with Christian liturgical chant and, more anecdotally, with synagogue liturgy, in addition to the importance assigned to certain languages for creating identity, and for wielding spiritual power in liturgical/religious and thus magical contexts, Ibn Taymiyya appears to associate the adoption of non-Arabic languages with the espousal of non-Islamic liturgies and patterns of speech which, wittingly or otherwise, would contradict Muslim doctrine. These in turn could lead to a more conscious acceptance of the power and authority of the communities who used these languages, especially in religious gatherings, i.e. churches and synagogues.

That religious motivation prompted at least some Muslims' visits to churches and participation in Christian rituals, and so fuelled the opposition of anti-*bida'* writers, is particularly apparent in al-Turkumānī's lengthy description and condemnation of such practices. Following a diatribe against attending Christian festivals, and shortly prior to his attempt to convince his readers that the public religious ceremonies of Christians need to be suppressed al-Turkumānī states:

> And a worse scourge than the first: Muslims going on *ziyāra* for their monks and the blessing of their flatbread. From where does this blessing come in this food and its associate, and he is afflicted by the anger of God, the all-knowing, and he has repudiated the law of Islam and was hostile to the Prophet, on him be peace? And a Muslim who makes a vow to churches or synagogues is mis-

125 el-Leithy, "Coptic Culture and Conversion," 8–9, 25, 134–36, 150–51, 199n64, 435, 439n175, 462–64.

126 Ibn Taymīya, *Kitāb iqtiḍā'*, 202–3; *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 204–5.

127 اياكم و رطانة الاعاجم و أن تدخلوا على المشركين عيدهم فى كنائسهم; Ibn Taymīya, *Kitāb iqtiḍā'*, 199; *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 203. My translation differs slightly from Memon's.

> guided. And this is a forbidden innovation that does not please God, and a vow is not permitted except to Sitt al-Nafīsa. Then what do you think about the vow to the monasteries, and the synagogues, and the church? Who among the sinners of the Muslims travelled with this cursed sect to their festivals and their holidays, they are to no avail, for it belongs to his violation of the sacred law and to his entrance into this horrible commandment. His worldly goods will be diminished and he falls from the eye of God. Because if he died in the desert, he died a carcass of the *jāhilīya*. Even if he died at sea, he is afflicted with drowning in this world and he strays, so that he has gone far away and been carried away in the acceptance of Satan and in something (that) angers the Merciful.[128]

The kinds of behaviour against which al-Turkumānī rails in this passage are very similar to that against which early Christian writers had to contend. In late antiquity church leaders admonished their parishioners for attending synagogues, Jewish festivals, or taking vows at synagogues or on the Torah.[129] Here, however, Muslims are attending churches and synagogues or monasteries and taking vows there.[130] Such activities strongly indicate that Muslims were attending churches for religious motivations, rather than for economic ones, or merely out of curiosity or fun. Like Ibn Taymiyya only in much greater detail, al-Turkumānī feels compelled to condemn going to *dhimmis*' places of worship on festival days. Not only do these Muslims go to churches and take vows there, they also go "on *ziyāra*…for their flatbread," i.e. they take communion, an act heavily imbued with religious meaning, and one which strongly implied Christian belonging. In a strategy similar to that of al-Azafī when he endeavoured to replace the celebration of Christmas with that of the *mawlid Muḥammad*, al-Turkumānī attempts to replace a non-Muslim practice with one which indicated the participants' Muslim allegiance. Rather than taking vows at churches or synagogues, al-Turkumānī reminds his Muslim audience that

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128 و أشد بلاء من الاول: سعى المسلم لزيارة رهبانهم, و التبرك بقرصهم: من أين تأتى البركة فى هذا الطعام, و صاحبه قد باء بغضب الملك العلام, و قد برىء من دين الاسلام, وهو عدو للنبى عليه السلام؟ والمسلم المغرور هو الذى ينذر, للكنائس أو البيع, النذر. وهذا بدعة محرمة, لا ترضى المولى الغفور. و لا يجوز النذر الا للست نفيسة. فما بالك بالنذر للديورة و البيع و الكنيسة. فمن سافر من فسقة المسلمين مع هذه الطائفة الملعونة الى أعيادهم و مواسمهم, فنفقته غير مخلوفة, لخروجه عن الشرع, و لدخوله فى هذا الامور المخيفة. فتنقص دنياه و يسقط من عين الله. فان مات أحدهم فى البر, مات ميتة جاهلية. وان مات فى البحر, فيبتلى بالغرق فى الدنيا, و بالعذاب فى الاخرة. و ان كان ماشيا, فالخطا كلها خطأ. لانه تغرب و هاجر فى رضى الشيطان, و فى شىء يغضب الرحمن.; al-Turkumānī , *Kitāb al-luma'*, 1:298. My thanks to Prof. Aziz Azmeh of the Central European University for his assistance with the translation of this passage. All errors are my own. On this author see Labib "The Problem of *Bida'*."

129 Gager, *Who Made Early Christianity?*, 37–116; Gardette, "The Judaizing Christians of Byzantium"; Shepardson, "Controlling Contested Spaces"; Becker and Reed, eds., *Ways that Never Parted*; Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*; Taylor, *Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity*, 26–52. The meaning of these claims is much debated among scholars, however.

130 The words الكنيسة (*al-kanīsah*) and البيعة (*al-bi'ah*) can be used to refer to either a synagogue or a church, and sometimes a monastery, thus determining which al-Turkumānī or any of the other Muslim authors had in mind is somewhat difficult. In this passage al-Turkumānī is mostly focused on Christian rituals, however, since he includes both words I have assumed that he means to refer to synagogues as well as churches in an inclusive condemnation, since if he only intended to discuss churches he presumably would have picked one of the terms and discussed only one place of worship, not two.

they should take vows to Sitt al-Nafīsa. Sayyida Nafīsa, or Sitt al-Nafīsa (Nafīsa bint al-Hasan, 762–824 CE), according to legend made her home in Egypt after coming from Arabia, in some versions in defiance of her husband, and remained in Egypt performing many miracles to those who sought her aid both in life and after death. Veneration of her continued throughout the Mamluk period and has remained popular until the present day.[131] As a quintessentially Muslim saint, Muslims should turn to her for aid or as an enforcer of their vows rather than turning to monks or relying on the sanctity of synagogues or churches.

In addition to reverence for the religious buildings and ceremonies of the *dhimmi*, fascination with monks and a belief that they possessed the capacity to provide blessing, were workers of miracles and were visionaries seem to have prompted Muslims to venerate and seek out these individuals.

> Whoever praised one of the monks, he is far away from the semblance of the law and from the people of excellence and of oaths. And it happens to some of the monks—because of his many devotions—some kind of vision: hunger gives birth to light. This vision is a lure for this cursed one, and an error for every ignorant and obsessed person. God, may he be praised, said: "We will entice them without their knowing"…Therefore know that a vision is far from the one whose heart God has made blind, and as it sometimes happens to astrologers. And the wiliness and wickedness could be in order to mislead the hearts of the careless with it (the vision). And the worshippers fall from the mercy of the Lord of the Worlds by visiting them (the monks) and gathering around them; for if a curse then falls upon them it will also affect their companions. And it is incumbent upon the Sultan that he reprimand those of the monks who have made themselves conspicuous, and besides them, the people of heresy and tyranny in anything of this sinfulness, cursedness and vileness. This—by God—is a great good, received by the worshipper in a day of need and poverty before him. For if he had the ability and he did not command it, he causes great affliction and remorse. And what corroborates this affliction and others in the Muslim religious community except neglect in its elimination at the time of its appearance and delaying its hour, its year, and its months. And Muslims have also neglected this straying, cursed group, and its festivals and feast days are visible for all the world to see. And that was not enough, when they walked about with their crosses throughout the country. And those who became monks revealed something that misled the believers to the extent that a group of ignorant of the Muslims found blessing in the prayer of the monks, and in their flat loaf, and in their cross which they erected it on top of food containers. And this *bida'* is only adopted by every leader of the obsessed; because the Christians went astray in their lies about the God most high of this world and the hereafter, and they did not understand. For the blessings of whatever one of them in

131 On her cult see Hoffman, "Muslim Sainthood"; Abu 'Alam, *Al-Sayyidat Nafisa*. Also see Chapter 4 of this book.

> his world, God does not bless him in the next. The blessing does not increase in one act of obedience or unbelief. Place faith in your Lord, oh one who is far from hope, and do not depart from the Sunnah, for fear of calamity at the end, at the [dark] void of death.[132]

Al-Turkumānī, in his effort to discourage his fellow Muslims from revering monks or joining in the religious ceremonies directed by them, does his utmost to discredit the monks themselves. He suggests that their visions come not from God, but from self-starvation. Whenever any predictions based on their visions come true, al-Turkumānī dismisses as accidental, similar to the guesswork of astrologers. If good fortune does come from the blessing of the monks or their eucharist "flatbread", al-Turkumānī warns that the recipient trades his heavenly reward for transient good luck in the present.

Al-Turkumānī reinforces his injunctions with threats far more dire than most of the other anti-*bida'* writers. In the first passage, not only are Muslims who indulge in such behaviour sinners, they "fall from the eye of God", a rather poetic way of saying that they deprive themselves of God's protection and favour. In death they are either like those Pagans who lived in Arabia before the coming of Islam and died in ignorance, and thus are doomed to hell, or significantly, even if they drown they are still subject to God's punishment. Given that according to some ḥadīth, drowning was one of the forms of accidental deaths for which the victim was accorded the status of martyr, this statement seems quite harsh, for even if a Muslim would normally receive an exalted place in heaven, participating in the festivals and religious ceremonies of Christians and Jews would both deprive them of that status in death and demote them to the status of punishable sinner.[133] Muslims who follow monks are led astray by Satan and should dread death, and what the monks follow is equated with heresy, vileness, cursedness in addition to sin. In the second passage he goes so far as to reprimand the Sultan for not taking stronger measures to prohibit public displays of worship by the Christians, which, according to al-Turkumānī, were responsible for leading Muslims astray. By implication, the Sultan himself is a sinner because his negligence contributes to the transgressive behaviour of Muslims. Such harsh efforts to intimidate his audience indicate how severe and widespread a problem al-Turkumānī felt these kinds of behaviour to be. Such lan-

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132 ومن مدح أحد من الرهبان, فهو بعيد الشبه من السنة, و من أهل الخير و الايمان.وقد يتفق لبعض الرهبانن—لكثرة رياضته—شيء من المكاشفة: يتولد من الجوع نور. و تكون تلك المكاشفة استدراجا لهذا الملعون, و ضلالة لكل جاهل و مفتون. قال الله سبحانه: سنستدرجهم من حيث لا يعلمون... . ثم اعلم بأن المكاشفة بعيدة ممن قد أعمى الله قلبه, و تقع مصادفة, كما يتفق لبعض. و قد تكون ملعنة و خباثة , ليضلوا بها قلوب الغافلين, و ليسقطوا العباد بزيارتهم, و بالاقبال عليهم من رحمة العالمين: لان اللعنة اذا نزلت عليهم, أصابت من جالسهم. ويجب على ولى الامر زجر من ظهر من الرهبان, وغيرهم من أهل الكفر و الطغيان بشيء من هذه الفتن, و الملعنة و اللائمة. فهي—و الله—حسنة عظيمة, يلقاها العبد يوم الحاجة و الفاقة أمامه. فان قدر و لم يأمره, يصير فى حسرة عظيمة و ندامة. و ما توكدت هذه الافة و غيرها فى الملة المحمدية الا من جهة التهاون فى إزالتها حين ظهورها, وتأخيرها من ساعاتها وسنيها وشهورها. وتهاون المسلمون أيضا في هذه الطائفة الضالة الملعونة, فأظهرت أعيادها و مواسمها على رؤس الاشهاد. و ما اكتفوا بذلك حتى طافوا بصلبانهم فى بعض البلاد. و أظهر من ترهب منهم شيئا يضل به العباد: حتى صار جماعة من جهلة المسلمين يتبركون بدعاء الرهبان وبقرصهم, و بصليبهم, و يضعونه فوق الجرون. و لا يفعل هذه البدعة الا كل مدبر مفتون: لان النصارى قد خسروا بكذبهم على الله تعالى الدنيا و الاخرة, و هم لا يشعرون. فان بورك لأحدهم فى دنياه, فهو ما رزقه الله فى الاجل. فالرزق لا يزيد بطاعة أحد و لا بكفره. فثق بربك يا بعيد الامل, و لا تخرج عن السنة, خوفا من سوء الخاتمة عند فروغ الاجل; al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-lum'a*, 1:300, 302. My thanks to Prof. Aziz Azmeh of the Central European University in Budapest for his assistance with the translation of this passage. All errors are my own.

133 Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, vol. 3, no. 3111.

guage also points to how threatened al-Turkumānī himself felt by Christian ceremonies in particular. Again, his anxiety accords with the more positively framed narratives and even legal material presented in Chapter 4, in which both Muslim and Christian sources indicate that not only Muslims, but Caliphs and Sultans, came to churches, and, according to Christian sources, sought healing and made donations to them.

Despite the extensive participation by Muslims in *dhimmi*, especially Christian, rituals portrayed in *Kitāb al-luma'*, and the degree to which al-Turkumānī deems such customs to undermine Muslim identity, he never raises the question of conversion. Rather, he depicts a kind of mixed affiliation to both Christianity and Islam. One possible explanation is that some Muslims saw no contradiction in being Muslims but also being participants in *dhimmi* ceremonies, much as many Christians saw no contradiction in attending synagogue, participating in Jewish festivals or seeking rabbis' blessings during late antiquity.[134] Given what we know of the long-standing Syrian Orthodox custom of providing the eucharistic bread to Muslims as a form of healing, it is plausible that the bread of the eucharist came to be used in this way in other churches, and drew Muslims to seek this form of blessing.[135] Thus, al-Turkumānī would have been fighting against a deeply engrained tradition. Another explanation, though one that does not exclude the first, is that in Egypt and Syria, as in Iberia and the Maghrib, was a kind partial conversion, where individuals shifted allegiance to Islam but retained ties to their old community. Any male Copt who converted to Islam prior to 1354 CE was likely to live with his predominantly Christian family, even his immediate family. After 1354, the entire family was required to convert with him.[136] In the first scenario, any Christian convert who retained relations with his or her family and friends would have experienced considerable pressure, or at least temptation, to continue celebrating the rituals of his or her previous religion. The temptation would have been that much stronger if the person's conversion to Islam had been done for the purposes of advancing his career, as many Muslims accused Copts of doing. After 1354, which is probably slightly later than this text, though not necessarily so, many Christians would have found themselves unwillingly and unwittingly transformed into Muslims, and thus would have been strongly inclined to continue practising what they considered their "true" religion. Indeed, the editor of al-Turkumānī's *Kitāb al-lum'a*, Ṣubḥī Labib, suggests that al-Turkumānī was describing the behaviour of Christian converts to Islam, and that indeed, al-Turkumānī, was himself one. Indications in the text hint that this may have been the case, for unlike the other *bida'* writers, al-Turkumānī includes a number of moralizing stories designed to demonstrate the correct behaviour of a Muslim if members of his family, particularly his parents, are Christian.[137]

This explanation accords particularly well with the material presented in al-Turkumānī's text, however, it also accords with the behaviours described by many of

134 See Chapter 3 for a discussion and the relevant literature on this subject.

135 On this see Chapter 4 and Taylor "The Syriac Baptism of St. John."

136 el-Leithy, "Coptic Culture and Conversion," 67–100, 181–98.

137 Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-luma'*, 1:309–310.

the other *bida'* writers. I do not argue that *all* Muslims who attended Christian holidays and went into churches or synagogues to receive blessings or join in rituals there were converts seeking to retain connections to their former religion. Rather I would suggest that those Muslims who participated in *dhimmi* religious rituals or travelled to their holy sites consisted of a mixture of converts to Islam or descendants of relatively recent converts, in addition to Muslims of long-standing who saw no contradiction to their Muslim identity to join or watch the religious celebrations of Christians or Jews, or to enter the sacred spaces of their non-Muslim neighbours to seek blessings there. Evidence for Jews and Christians participating in one another's rituals or those of Islam or seeking out holy sites or individuals that were not their own is sparser, however, those indications that exist also suggest that some *dhimmi* saw such behaviour as posing little contradiction in their own identity as Jews or Christians.

Conclusions

The picture that emerges from these authors' writings is that Muslims, Christians, and Jews socialized and attended one another's festivals and holy places regularly and that Muslims adapted Christian rituals to create their own versions of festivals. Such easy conviviality disturbed these Muslim legalists not merely because they saw such behaviour as condemnable *bida'*, but because for them it placed Muslims and non-Muslims, men and women seemingly on a par at a time when Muslims, Christians, and Jews were fighting for rhetorical and even literal primacy.[138] For many Christian and Jewish opponents to what they saw as excessive mixing with or imitation of Muslims, such behaviour paved the way for loss of religious identity. These festivals and interreligious encounters at the gravesites of the holy dead in turn also opened the door to transgressive, especially sexually transgressive activity, the ultimate indicator of blurred or abandoned boundaries.[139] One solution that some individuals such as al-Azafī and al-Turkumānī proposed was to offer a "Muslim" substitution for the non-Muslim practice. Similarly, Abraham Maimonides and likeminded colleagues cultivated a kind of Jewish "Sufism" seemingly in part to substitute and draw Jews away from Muslim Sufi devotional circles (though as we saw in the previous chapter, this strategy did not always work over the *longue-durée*).

138 On the distinction between praiseworthy and condemnable *bida'* see Fierro, "The Treatises against Innovations"; Ukeles, "Innovation or Deviation," 87–199. There is little indication that Jews actively fought either on behalf of the Muslims or for their own sake; however, some Jews certainly fantasized about a military victory—usually on the part of the Muslims, whose (temporary) rule of Palestine was thought to be ordained by God—that would result in Jewish possession of Jerusalem, and some posited the existence and victory of Jewish armies. Goldman, "Arabic-Speaking Jews in Crusader Syria," 32–33, 35–36 40–41, 81, 140; Cuffel, "Call and Response"; Prawer, *The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 65–69; Lewis, "An Apocalyptic View of Islamic History"; Baer, "Eine jüdische Messiasprophetie"; Neubauer, "Une pseudo-biographie de Moïse Maimonide," Not all agreed, however: cf. Firestone, *Holy War in Judaism*, 123–38.

139 On this idea, albeit in a very different context see Nirenberg, "Conversion, Sex, and Segregation."

Abraham Maimonides' attempt to use Muslim assertions of supersession and possession of true revelation to justify his own adaptation of and attempts to proliferate Muslim practices and mystical ideas within the Jewish Rabbanite community was certainly more subtle than open objections to imitation of Muslim practice, and wild behaviour, His reinterpretation of the origins of these practices served to underscore the special, divinely chosen status of the Jewish people, all the more if they were to adopt these "lost" rituals and understandings found among the Muslim Sufis. His approach is but one of the more elaborate efforts on the part of religious minorities to make use of Muslim concerns regarding religious innovation, not only among their own ranks, but among the non-Muslim religious communities under their rule.

Religious identity in the Islamic world from the twelfth through the sixteenth-centuries seems to have been fluid rather than absolute. In al-Andalus, the Maghrib, and the Middle East, such fluidity or hybridity, rather than overt conversion, is what religious leaders who opposed these customs found particularly threatening, regardless of their community affiliation. Yet while many opponents to shared practices deplored their co-religionists' willingness to join with those of other communities or to engage in practices or go to spaces associated with another religion, and they interpreted these behaviours as wilfully blurring the distinctions between religious communities, we do not, alas, have accounts by individual Muslims, who for, example, took their child to be bathed/baptized on *ʿīd al-ghiṭas* (Epiphany) or *ʿīd al-zaytūnah*, (Palm Sunday), or who participated in the Eucharist ceremony. As we have seen from the previous chapter, intermingled among those who joined rituals or travelled to holy sites for religious purposes or healing, were also those who were pleasure-seekers or merely curious. In contrast to the former, the latter wrote of their experiences. In attempting to assess the meanings behind those who engaged in celebrations and rituals associated with other communities, two scholars' observations may be helpful. One is David Frankfurter who argues that places, holy sites, and practices, rather than belief systems are the important avenues to sacred power, rather than belief systems. While the doctrinal explanations for a particular place or ritual's efficacy may change, the recollection and conviction of the holy power involved remains.[140] Also wrestling with the problem of "pagan" remnants and shared practices, this time in Ottoman Syria and Palestine, James Grehan has argued for a common religious culture, most particularly in relation to agricultural need, in which community memory and efficacy supersede confessional memberships, so that a kind of agricultural religion co-existed with and overlaid more official, systematic religious affiliations. Bonds between members of a local community, regardless of individual religious adherence, therefore became a deciding factor in ritual practices.[141] Opponents to shared practices, therefore, were fighting to make the belief systems attached to rituals take primacy, even as they struggled to make their co-religionists understand the importance of demonstrating the greater dignity and the primacy of their specific religious tradition.

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140 Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 32, 34–35.

141 Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 116–40, 187–96.