



# SHARED SAINTS AND FESTIVALS AMONG JEWS, CHRISTIANS, AND MUSLIMS IN THE MEDIÉVAL MEDITERRANEAN

by

**ALEXANDRA CUFFEL**

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# CONTENTS

Acknowledgements .....	vii
Abbreviations.....	viii
Introduction .....	1
Chapter 1. Holy Spaces and Holy Corpses: Defining Sanctity and Veneration of the Dead from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages.....	19
Chapter 2. The Other as Witness to the Truth: Positive Responses to Shared Religious Veneration among Jewish and Christian Pilgrims to the Middle East from Western Europe.....	49
Chapter 3. Forceful Saints and Compelling Rituals: Real and Imagined Jewish and Muslim Participation in Christian Rituals and Saint Cults from Byzantium to Western Europe .....	73
Chapter 4. Praising, Cursing, or Ignoring the Other: Jews, Christians, and Muslims at One Another's Holy Spaces in the Islamicate Mediterranean .....	109
Chapter 5. Opposition to Shared Saints and Festivals in the Islamicate World .....	157
Chapter 6. Upholding the Dignity of the Faith and Separating Believers and Unbelievers in Medieval Christian Societies .....	191
Conclusions.....	243
Bibliography.....	251
Index .....	309

To my mother  
Victoria Jean Cuffel  
who taught me to cherish research  
as a hedonistic pursuit.

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(and also Muslim, Zoroastrian, and Hindu) relations are reflected in this monograph, the broader historical contexts and methodological considerations are very much at its core. I am thankful to the team of researchers with whom I had the pleasure to work during this project: Zaroui Pogossian, Barbara Roggema, Istvan Perczel, Neda Darabian, Bar Kribus, Sophia Dege-Müller, Verena Krebs, Stephen Rapp, Radu Mustata, and Ophira Gamliel. The second half of Chapter 6 of this book, is a product of the European Research Council project ArmEN (grant agreement no. 867067), led by Zaroui Pogossian. A number of people on both projects, and also Margarita Voulgaropoulou, Rania Ahmed, Mohsen Zakhari, and Ana Echevarria have supplied bibliographic suggestions, language and editorial support. Ben Segev, my student assistant has also been immensely helpful and patient chasing down and scanning more documents than either of us care to recall. Additionally, my thanks to Wendy Belcher who enabled access to the Princeton University library during Covid, and graciously opened her home on a number of research trips.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

BT	Babylonian Talmud
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
EI	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam</i> , 2nd Edition
HOCP	Sawirus ibn al-Muqaffa', <i>History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church</i> , known as the history of the Holy Church, Cairo: n.p., 1943–.
HOPC	Sawirus ibn al-Muqaffa', <i>History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria</i>
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PL	Patrologia Latina
PO	Patrologia Orientalis
TS	Taylor-Schechter Collection, Cambridge University Library

## INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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1 فإن الموافقة في جميع العبد : موافقة في الكفر والموافقة في بعض فروعه: موافقة في بعض شعب الكفر، بل الاعياد هي من أخص ما 1  
Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtida'*, 207–8. English translation: Ibn Taymiyya, *Ibn Taymiyya's Struggle*, 206–7.

2 وأما ما يتبع ذلك من التوسع في العادات من الطام و اللباس، و اللعب و الراحة: فهو تابع لذلك العيد الديني، كما أن ذلك تابع له في 2  
دين الاسلام . . . كما يغير أهل البدع عاداتهم في الامور العادية، أو في بعضها يصنعهم طعاما، أو زينة لباس، أو توسيع في نفقة و نحو  
؛ ذلك من غير أن يتعدوا بتلك العادة المحدثه: كان هذا من أقبح المنكرات، فكتلك موافقة هؤلاء المغضوب عليهم و الضالين و أشد  
Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtida'*, 208, 209; *Ibn Taymiyya's Struggle*, 207.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**10** Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 10.

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

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

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

### Chronology, Sources, and Organization

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**19** Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers and Infidels*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**27** Cuffel, “Call and Response”; Kanarfogel, “The *‘Aliyah* of the Three Hundred Rabbis”; Praver, *The History of the Jews of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 149–54; Goitein, *Ha-Yishuv be-Erez-Yisra’el*, 41, 338–43.

**28** Gampel, “A Letter to a Wayward Teacher.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

dead was a key tenant of Lurianic kabbalah, and some of the rituals and beliefs seem to have been influenced by Sufi practices.<sup>35</sup> At this point we also see the first pilgrim-age guides written for Jewish women.<sup>36</sup>

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

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

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

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

## Methodological Issues

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

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

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

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

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

**40** Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt*, 17.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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47 Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 19

48 Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo*.

49 Mayeur-Jaouen, *Pèlerinages d’Égypte*, 24–25.

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

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

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

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

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

**54** Cohn, “Sainthood on the Periphery.”

have demonstrated that these practices were widespread among medieval Muslims and Jews at all levels of society.<sup>55</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

exchanges or have overwhelmingly focused on a specific region or even cities on or near the Mediterranean Sea rather than studying the Mediterranean region as a whole.<sup>67</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Chapter I

# HOLY SPACES AND HOLY CORPSES

## DEFINING SANCTITY AND VENERATION OF THE DEAD FROM LATE ANTIQUITY TO THE MIDDLE AGES

### Introduction

Recent scholarship on late antique Judaism and Christianity emphasizes that many varieties of Judaism and Christianity existed during this period, each claiming to have the “truth” in contradistinction to other “Jewish” or “Christian” groups, although with the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, a number of forms of Judaism, such as the Dead Sea community, disappeared.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, scholars of Roman religions other than Judaism or Christianity, point to the multiplicity of these religions, warning that substantial differences in interpretation and ritual existed even within the same cult within separate geographic areas of the empire or periods of time.<sup>2</sup> Often variations stemmed from influences from other local religions or practices.<sup>3</sup>

Within this atmosphere of frequent borrowing and porous boundaries, Jews, Christians, and adherents of many of the other religions from the Greco-Roman world from the first century BCE through the fourth century CE and beyond held or adopted similar rituals and attitudes relating to honouring the dead or requesting relief from environmental threats or illness. Sometimes the absorption of a particular ritual from one group or groups to another occurred seamlessly, with little comment. For example, Christians adopted *robegalia*, originally a supplication (and sacrifice) to keep crops free from blight, making it an integral part of the Church liturgy—the Major Rogation—in which God was asked to protect the harvest.<sup>4</sup> Frequently, commonalities of attitude and ritual came about slowly, seemingly with little awareness of increasing rapprochement, laying the groundwork for explicitly shared holy spaces and practices, in which the presence of the religious other was desirable or even necessary by the Middle Ages. At other times, certain ideas, holy places, or rites were very consciously assumed and transformed to suit the ideological and ritual needs of the community adopting them.

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**1** Boyarin, *Border Lines*; Boyarin, *Dying for God*; Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*; Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*; Satlow, “Defining Judaism”; Lieu, *Christian Identity*; Fonrobert, “Jewish Christians”; North and Rajak, *Jews among Pagans and Christians*; Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom*; Schiffman, *Who was a Jew?*

**2** Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 6–7, 11–15; Turcan, *The Cults of the Roman Empire*, 7–9; Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 1:48, 69–72, 75–76, 381–88; Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 440, 446; Chaniotis, “Ritual Dynamics.”

**3** Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 1:69–72, 383; Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 97–197.

**4** Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 1:45, 47; Flint, *The Rise of Magic*, 186; Scullard, *Festivals and Ceremonies*, 108–9. The date of both the Roman and Christian festival was April 25.

Unfortunately, while many scholars have examined the influence of various forms of Christianity and Judaism on Islam and the ways in which Muslim law built upon or consciously deviated from pre-Islamic customs, only recently have researchers begun to address questions of porous boundaries between Muslims and other religious communities and whether one can speak of Judeo-Muslims, or Islamo-Christians in the same way that those focusing on early Jewish-Christian relations have done in their study of Judaism and Christianity.<sup>5</sup> I will touch upon this subject; however, my primary intent is to examine the development of symbols that became a vocabulary of religious signs recognizable across denominational boundaries. I maintain that various types of Jews, Christians and Muslims assigned strong symbolic value to smell, light, and certain natural markers, such as trees, stones, sometimes water ways, etc. which established a basis for shared, or at least parallel, rituals relating to the holy dead across religious communal boundaries. Furthermore, the development of attitudes among the different communities toward the dead, holy or otherwise, and their ability to intercede for or communicate with the living, and the need on the part of the dead for the prayers of the living, had substantial points of mutual influence and/or intersection. Beliefs about the dead were not identical, but they were close enough to facilitate one group's borrowing from another or participating in another's rites relating to the holy dead. These commonalities, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, not only made shared rituals easier, they also fed the anxieties of some religious leaders that the boundaries between groups were too porous, and that too many "foreign" practices were being adopted, which corrupted the purity or truth of a given author's religion.

### Shared Signs of Holiness

Jews, Christians, and participants in a number of the polytheistic religions in antiquity, and Muslims, Jews and Christians in the Middle Ages, held many markers of sanctity in common, although the specific beliefs about these signs—to what deity they belonged, or how a place became holy—often varied between groups and changed over time. Many of these symbols—fragrance, or lack of smell, freedom from rot, light, trees, stones,

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<sup>5</sup> Various scholars have tackled aspects of this problem. Thomas Sizgorich examined the intersections of late antique and early medieval Christian and Muslim asceticism and militancy in his *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity*; Patricia Crone and Michael Cook point out that early Christian communities perceived Islam as a heretical variation of Christianity not a new religion—*Hagarism*. Steven Wasserstrom examines selected areas of religious interchanges and borrowings between Muslims and Jews in the first few centuries of Islam. See his *Between Muslim and Jew*. Also see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*; Ohlig and Puin, *The Hidden Origins of Islam*; Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers* suggests that Jews and Christians were part of the "community of believers" surrounding Muḥammad, even as their Jewish and Christian identity was also recognized. According to Donner, the requirement to believe in specific doctrines to the exclusion of others and become "Muslim" as the term came to be understood in subsequent centuries, was a gradual development. See 57–60, 68–77, 87–89, 101, 107–15, 125, 134, 203–4, 221–32. Earlier scholars took a more traditional approach and addressed questions of direct borrowing rather than fluid boundaries between Muslims and non-Muslims. See Katsch, *Judaism in Islām*; Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'an*; Goldziher, "Über jüdisch Sitten," 78–101; Goldziher, "Usages Juifs," 322–41.

sources of water and sometimes caves—continued to inform attitudes and practices of Jews, Christians, and Muslims of the late medieval and early modern Mediterranean.

### Smell and Incorruptibility

Sweet or foul smell had long been indicators of holiness or evil respectively in ancient Greek culture and then in late antique Jewish and Christian culture.<sup>6</sup> Heaven itself was imagined as a fragrant garden redolent with the scents of fruits, incense, and spices, as of course, was the garden of Eden.<sup>7</sup> Romans of various religious persuasions, including Jews and Christians, ensured that the “regular” dead were anointed with perfumes to counteract the smell of decay.<sup>8</sup> Having a naturally or miraculously fragrant corpse indicated that the person was above decay, and thus closely linked with the divine world. In both late antique Christianity and Judaism the corpses of rabbis, saints and martyrs were regularly portrayed as odourless or, more frequently, as emitting a pleasant fragrance.<sup>9</sup> In one passage from the Babylonian Talmud, the scholar is compared to a flask of perfume, whose delightful scent compels even the angel of death to love him.<sup>10</sup> Certainly Jesus’ own body and those objects associated with it were fragrant; in the sixth-century Syriac legend of the discovery of the true cross, one of the “proofs” which the Jew, Judas Kyriakos, stipulates that God provide to demonstrate the location and significance of the cross, is that a sweet smell of incense emanate from its burial place.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, in a tenth-century Latin version of the legend, Judas, who assists the Empress Helena, prays over the area where the cross is hidden and “at once the place shook and a great cloud of smoke, fragrant with sweet spices, ascended to the heavens.”<sup>12</sup> These tropes existed in Northern Europe as well as in the Maghrib, the Middle East, and lands along the European Mediterranean. The Merovingian, Dado of Rouen, writing in the sev-

**6** Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 21–26, 35–39; Harvey, *Scenting Salvation*; Detienne, *The Gardens of Adonis*, especially 48–49; Classen, Howes, and Synott, *Aroma*, 45–47, 53–54.

**7** 1 Enoch 24: 4–6 in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:26; Harvey, *Scenting Salvation*, 49–53; Green, *The Aroma of Righteousness*, 119–22, 128

**8** Green, “Sweet Spices in the Tomb”; Classen, *Aroma*, 42–45, 52–55.

**9** See for example BT Bava Mezia 83b–85a; Ephraem Syrus, *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns*, hymn 22, stanza 28, p. 184 and the discussion of St. Stephen’s body: Lucian of Caphamargala, *Epistula Luciani*, PL 41, epistle 8, col. 815; Green, *The Aroma of Righteousness*, 187–201; Boyarin, “The Great Fat Massacre”; Boyarin, *Carnal Israel*, 200–12, 219–25; Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 76–77, 91–93; Brown, *The Body and Society*, 5–8, 26–28, 85–86, 92–102, 293–303; Harvey, *Scenting Salvation*, 11–13, 20–21 46–47, 227–29; Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body*, part 1. Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 35–39; Classen, Howes, and Synott, *Aroma*, 52–55. Thomas Sizgorich demonstrates, however, that the oozing, suffering, and even rotting bodies of martyrs and ascetics also became a theme in early Christian literature, serving in part to tie the sufferings of later ascetics with those of Christians martyred by the Roman empire. *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity*, 124–27.

**10** BT Avodah Zara 35b, Green, *The Aroma of Righteousness*, 173–75.

**11** Drijvers and Drijvers, *Finding of the True Cross*, Syriac, 46, Eng. 64.

**12** *Inventio Sanctae Crucis*, para. 11, p. 90.

enth century, describes St. Eligius of Noyon diligently and for a long time, unsuccessfully, seeking the bodies of Christian martyrs. When his quest is at last rewarded:

Then filled with great joy, he opened the tomb with the hoe he held in his hand and a fragrant odor with a great light spread from it so that Eligius could barely sustain his strength in the power of that odor and that light. A globe of splendor proceeded from the tomb at the striking blow. It shed the strength of its brightness so much that it blinded the eyes of those who were standing around and changed night to day in the greater part of the region...Having found the holy body, Eligius kissed it with tears of joy and raising it from the depths of the ground he divided the desired relics into eleven parts. As he extracted the teeth from the jaws, a drop of blood flowed from the root of each tooth...And then he distributed the relics which he had taken from the saint's body to many places where they healed many invalids praying for help.<sup>13</sup>

The tremendous scent and overwhelming light underscore the great degree of holiness possessed by the martyr whose body Eligius finds. In case these are not enough, this long-dead body continues to bleed, something it should not be able to do.<sup>14</sup> This very physical manifestation, as opposed to the more ethereal ones of light and smell, attests to the martyr's continued connection to life and its power to overcome the usual natural processes of its own decay and the sicknesses of the believers in search of healing.

Within early Islamic traditions, heaven was also imagined as a place fragrant with spices and perfume, where the inhabitants were free of pollution or bodily elimination.<sup>15</sup> Sweet smell and freedom from excretion in the earthly realm were similarly signs of heavenly origin or human sanctity.<sup>16</sup> Lack of decay likewise indicated holiness. Martyrs

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**13** "Tunc gaudio magno repletus, cum sarculo quem manu gestabat avidissime latus ferisset sepulcri confestim forato tumulo, tanta odoris fragrantia cum inmenso lumine ex eo manavit, ut etiam ipse sanctus Eligius fulgore luminis odoreque inenarrabili percussus vix subsistere potuisset. Nam et globus splendoris, qui ex tunulo ad ictum ferientis processit, tantam vim suae claritatis sparsit, ut cunctorum adstantium obtutibus oculorum retunsis, partem maximam regionis illius in diei claritatem mutaret...Tunc ergo sacrum inventum corpus Eligius cum gaudio lacrimabili exosculatur, ac de profunda tellure elevato, reliquias sibi undecumque concupivit segregavit, dentes etiam pro languentium medulla ex maxilla sancta abstulit, atque in radice dentis gutta sanguinis exivit. Ipse demum ex reliquiis, quae a sancto corpora sequestraverat, multa loca convivit multimodamque medalam diversis aegritudinum incomodis easdem inperiendo praebeuit"; Dado of Rouen, *Vitae Eligii Episcopi Noviomagensis*, Bk 2, para. 6, 699; English translation in Dado of Rouen, *Life of St. Eligius of Noyon*, 154. Compare with the transferred relics of St. Marcellinus which are so fragrant that their scent attracts a crowd of people from the surrounding area to the basilica in Aachen. Einhard, *Translatio et Miracula SS. Marcellini et Petri*, 247; Einhard, *Translation of the Relics of Sts. Marcellinus and Petery*, 217–18. An important difference, however, is that medieval Jews and Muslims did *not* generally dismember their holy dead in order to distribute their bodily relics.

**14** On the paradox of bleeding corpse (and eucharist) miracles, albeit in a very later period see Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 107, 137, 145, 148, 167–72.

**15** Rustomji, *The Garden and the Fire*, 17, 70–77, 84.

**16** Houris, the women of paradise, are sweet-smelling and do not menstruate. Faṭīma is compared

and other holy individuals resisted decomposition and dismemberment whereas the opponents of Islam or insincere Muslims rotted quickly and smelled particularly foul or were deprived of the scent of paradise.<sup>17</sup> Even those martyrs who had been mutilated in the course of battle resisted change or decomposition. According to some, their souls escaped the suffering that would normally stem from such an experience because they abandoned their old bodies and immediately obtained new ones in Paradise.<sup>18</sup> A curious tale first recounted by the Muslim geographer al-Bakrī (ca. 1040–1094) and then, with some changes, in the anonymous twelfth-century geographic work, *Kitāb al-Istibṣār*, points to the widespread acceptance of these indicators of sanctity and the potential paths of transmission between religious traditions in the Mediterranean. Al-Bakrī describes the following:

On the way to Biskra is a mountain known as Zīghīzī. In the middle of it is a cave [and] in it a man [who was] killed who did not change with the passage of time. And [although] he grew old his wounds remained tender and bled as if he had been killed a couple of days ago. All the people said they did not know when he had been killed and bled. This people used to relocate the body and they buried him in their courtyard to be blessed by him. Then they did not prevent his being found in the cave in his (same) state.<sup>19</sup>

In this passage, the unchanging nature of the corpse is emphasized—indeed the man bleeds as if still living—placing the body in a kind of limbo between life and death. The local people seem to have taken the great age of the body, its failure to decompose, and its continual bleeding as both miraculous and evidence that the body could provide blessing by close proximity. The person/corpse's identity or religious affiliation is irrelevant in face of the obvious manifestations of holiness on the body itself. In *Kitāb al-Istibṣār*,

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to them, and she and her grave are fragrant, as is the Prophet Muḥammad. Soufi, "Image of Fatima," 163–64, 166; Van Gelder, *God's Banquet*, 23.

**17** al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 1 bk. 4, no. 237, vol. 2, bk. 23, no. 1351, vol. 3, bk. 34, no. 2101, vol. 4, bk. 56, no. 2803, bk. 58, no. 3166, vol. 7, bk. 72 nos. 5533, 5534, vol. 9, bk. 87, no. 6914, bk. 93 no. 7150; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, vol. 5, bk. 40 (Kitāb al-Adab/Book of Etiquette), no. 4829; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, Kitāb al-Imārah (Book of Leadership), nos. 4859, 4862, 4863, vol. 7, Kitāb Ṣifāt al-Munāfiqīn wa Aḥkāmihim (Book of the Characteristics of Hypocrites and Commands concerning them) no. 7036; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *Kitāb al-qubūr*, no. 93; Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 230, 233; Kugle, *Sufis and Saints' Bodies*, 65–67; Rustomji, *The Garden and the Fire*, 60; Eklund, *Life between Death and Resurrection*, 70, 99, 138–39.

**18** Malik ibn Anas, *Muwaṭṭaʿa*, bk. 21, no. 21.21.50; Malik *Muwaṭṭaʿa* (Arabic; <http://archive.org/details/AlMuwattaImamMalikIbnAnas>) Kitāb al-Jihād, 215; Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 208; on the belief that the dead remained connected to the grave and experienced torture or pleasure there see 197–233 and the discussion below. Also see Eklund, *Life Between Death and Resurrection*, 16–20, 68–70, 102–4.

**19** في الطريق إلى بسكرة جبل يعرف بزيجزي في وسطه كهف فيه رجل قتيلى لم يغيره مر الزمان و تقادم الدهور تبصن جراحه دما كانما قتل منذ يومين وتخبر الكافة انهم لا يعلمون متى قتل قداما وقد نقله اهل تلك النواحي و دفنوه بافنيته تبركا به ثم لم ينشوا ان وجدوه في قتل منذ يومين وتخبر الكافة انهم لا يعلمون متى قتل قداما وقد نقله اهل تلك النواحي و دفنوه بافنيته تبركا به ثم لم ينشوا ان وجدوه في قتله على حاله; Bakrī, *Description de l'Afrique septentrionale*, Arabic 52–53, French transl. 113. On this passage in Bakrī see Speight, "Témoignage des sources musulmanes."

the author transmits a rumour that the body belongs to one of the apostles of Jesus.<sup>20</sup> Certainly the unchanging, bleeding body, able to miraculously transport itself back to its original resting place would not be out of place in medieval Christian hagiography, as we see from the story of St. Eligius of Noyon. In both cases, an anonymous body's preservation and ability to bleed "prove" its special sanctity. Ḥadīth about the bodies of martyrs also remark upon the unchanging (uncorrupted) state of martyrs' bodies, which resist the efforts of the living to rearrange the corpses.<sup>21</sup> Marston Speight argues that al-Bakrī describes an older tradition and that the Christian origin of the body is a later addition.<sup>22</sup> Even if his contention is correct, what is significant for our purposes is that Muslims clearly recognized a body's unchanging state as demonstrating its sanctity, and that this kind of piety or miracle was also associated with Christianity, yet not rejected as illegitimate as a result. Rather it was wilfully accepted as part of a shared language of signs.

Fragrance and lack of decomposition continued to mark the sanctity of the medieval holy dead from all three traditions throughout the Middle Ages and into the sixteenth century.<sup>23</sup> The Muslim, Abū l-Ṭāhir al-Fārisī, recounts about the Tunisian saint, Muḥriz al-Khalaf (d. 1022 CE), that a group from Kairouan sitting near Muḥriz's tomb were so delighted by the wonderful fragrance emanating it, that they were compelled to compose poetry about this miracle.<sup>24</sup> Ibn Shaddād (1217–1285 CE) describes the arguments of a Shi'i villager who asserted that the remains of a miscarried fetus had to be those of Husain's son because the body had not decomposed.<sup>25</sup> The Iberian Jewish poet, translator, and traveller, Judah al-Ḥarizi (ca. 1165–1125 CE) composed a poem regarding the grave of the Prophet Ezekiel, comparing it to a bundle of myrrh, the scent of which cannot be hidden.<sup>26</sup> Josef Meri notes that when Muslim or Jewish saints did not produce their own fragrance, their devotees provided it for them in the forms of incense and rosewater.<sup>27</sup> By contrast, in *Sefer Ḥasidim*, a book of Jewish moral tales and instructions by R. Judah ha-Ḥasid (ca. 1150–1217 CE) from Germany, a righteous man who had been buried next to a wicked one appears in a dream to everyone in the town and complains

**20** *Kitāb al-istibṣār*, 173; Speight, "Témoignage des sources musulmanes."

**21** Malik, *Muwaṭṭa*, bk. 21, no. 21.21.50; Malik *Muwaṭṭa* (Arabic) Kitāb al-Jihād, 215.

**22** Speight, "Témoignage des sources musulmanes." Speight goes so far as to suggest a Mithraic origin of the cult based on the story's preoccupation with blood, however bulls' blood, not humans', was a focal point of the worship of Mithra, so this origin seems unlikely to me. On the cult of Mithra in the Roman empire see Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 1:279–80, 282–83, 285, 303; Turcan, *The Cults of the Roman Empire*, 195–247.

**23** Kugle, *Sufis and Saints' Bodies*, 65–67. Not everyone readily accepted the miraculously lovely aroma of saints, however. See Olesen's discussion of Ibn Taymiyya in his *Culte des Saints*, 121–23.

**24** Abū-l-Ṭāhir al-Fārisī, *Manāqib d'Abū Ishāq*, Arabic, 93–94, French, 276.

**25** Ibn Shaddād, *A'lāq*, 49. The child to whom the narrative refers is Muḥassin, a son of Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī b. Abī Ṭalib (thus, making him the short-lived great grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad) who was miscarried when opponents of the 'Alids attacked 'Alī's household. Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 159–69; Mulder, *The Shrines of the 'Alids*, 68–82.

**26** Al-Ḥarizi, *Ṭahkemoni* 2:214–215 (English); 2: 56b. On Judah al-Ḥarizi in the context of Jewish pilgrimage and travel narratives see Jacobs, *Reorienting the East*, 47–48, 57, 150–52, 174–75.

**27** Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 25–26.

that he cannot rest for the stench of his neighbour, which is like that of a latrine. To assuage him, the townspeople place a barrier between his grave and that of his wicked neighbour.<sup>28</sup> In a similar, but highly polemical move, the travel narrative of Petaḥia of Regensburg (1170–1187) suggests the wrongness of Islam by describing Muḥammad's grave as occupied by a putrid corpse whose reek drives away believers.<sup>29</sup> Thus, if the postmortem proof that someone was holy consisted of a lovely aroma, the testimony of evil equalled a stinking cadaver; olfactory symbolic poles that were understood equally by twelfth-century northern European Jews as by Muslims in early medieval Arabia. Their Christian counterparts, whether in Western Europe or in the Eastern Mediterranean, understood these signals equally well.<sup>30</sup>

Some holy individuals did not even have to wait until death for fragrance to prove their sanctity. Constance Classen has demonstrated that wonderful fragrance often permeated the bodies of and objects which western Christian saints touched, not only in death, but also in life.<sup>31</sup> The Andalusian Sufi, Ibn al-'Arabī (1165–1240 CE), says that the tears of one of his teachers, Abū Aḥmad al-Salawī, smelled like musk and that he used to wipe his face with those that al-Salawī had shed upon the ground. People encountering Ibn 'Arabī would ask where he had purchased such a wonderful scent.<sup>32</sup>

Shared expectations of fragrant saintliness and stinking immorality as markers of the status of the dead and the living in the eyes of God, along with customs that ensured that the stench of decay remained at bay for the "normal" dead, would have made the hagiographic traditions of each group comprehensible to members of other religious communities. Comprehensibility in turn established the basis for the appeal and potential transferability of saints across religious boundaries.

## Light

Light was a special sign of sanctity for all three faiths. Prior to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, the Jewish community that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls characterized themselves as the "sons of light" in contrast to their enemies, "the sons of darkness," and referred to the "lord of lights" or "angel of darkness". The place where evildoers go is also characterized by darkness.<sup>33</sup> In early rabbinic sources, both the

**28** *Sefer Ḥasidim*, ed. Margolioth, para. 705, 439.

**29** Petaḥia of Regensburg, *Sivuv R. Petaḥia me-Regensburg*, 51; Petaḥia, in Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 84; Jacobs, *Reorienting the East*, 152–53.

**30** Harvey, *Scenting Salvation*; Harvey, "Olfactory Knowing"; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 36, 67, 79, 133–34, 136–37, 143; Browning, "The 'Low Level' Saint's Life"; Tolan, "Un cadaver mutilé"; Classen, *The Color of Angels*, 36–37, 39, 40–42, 45–47, 55–56; Duval, *Après des saints corps*, 59, 163–67.

**31** Classen, *The Color of Angels*, 36–71, although she does note that occasionally saint's bodies smelled bad, something for which authors need to account for theologically; see p. 50. Being foul smelling, especially while living (though frequently fragrant in death) was also a theme in Greek and Syriac Christian hagiographic traditions. See Harvey, "Olfactory Knowing"; Browning, "The 'Low Level' Saint's Life."

**32** Ibn al-'Arabī, *Risālat*, 127.

**33** Charlesworth et al., *Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. 1, *Rule of the Community*, 1QS, pp. 14/15, lines 19–21,

human soul and God's commandments are likened to a lamp, and the Torah is described as "light."<sup>34</sup> Somewhat more concretely, in *Pesiqta de Rav Kahana* (fifth century CE), the wicked are described as dwelling in the darkness of the abyss. In another chapter of the same midrash, R. Simon b. Yoḥai (second century CE) is compared to a rainbow and its radiance, serving the same covenantal function for his generation as the original rainbow did for Noah and his descendants.<sup>35</sup> Living Jews also brought artificial light to the resting place of the dead in late antiquity. While rabbis prohibited blessing lamps and incense of non-Jews or of the dead, textual and archaeological evidence suggests that the custom of lighting lamps at graves was fairly common among late antique Jews.<sup>36</sup> The tenth-century Karaite author, Saḥl b. Maṣṣliāḥ castigated Rabbinite Jews for having had adopted the custom of lighting lamps and incense at the graves of the holy dead, and accused them of having borrowed these practices from non-Jewish cultures.<sup>37</sup> His complaint indicates simultaneously that for some early medieval Jews light as well as fragrance were essential markers of holiness on the one hand, but on the other, that these symbols and the customs surrounding them in relation to the dead were recognized as being among the practices of other religious groups, thus laying the Rabbinite Jews open to Saḥl b. Maṣṣliāḥ's polemic. In fact, light was indeed an important representation of sanctity for Christians, and, eventually, for Muslims.

For early medieval Christians, light, par excellence, symbolized the incorruptible nature of Jesus, able to pass untainted through all manner of filth.<sup>38</sup> In the Merovingian example cited earlier, abundant and overwhelming light, as much as fragrant scent, marked the sanctity of the tomb that Eligius found. Nor was this a peculiarity of Western European Christianity. Béatrice Chevallier Caseau has demonstrated that dreams or

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QS3, pp. 16/17, col. 3, line 25, col. 4, lines 11, 13, QS11, pp. 48/49, l. 10, 4QS MSD pp. 80/81, frag. 3, line 12, 4QS MSF, pp. 90/91 frag. 1, col. 2, lines 1–2; Charlesworth et al., *Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. 2, *Damascus Document, War Scroll and Related Documents: War Scroll* [1QM, 1Q33], pp. 96/97 col. 1, lines 1, 3, 7, 9–14, pp. 122/123, col. 13, lines. 11, 15, 16, pp. 126/127, col. 14, line 17, 4QM1, pp. 150/151 frags. 8–10, col. 1, line 14, 4QM6, pp. 178/179, frag. 3 l. 7; Charlesworth et al., *Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol 3, *Damascus Document II: 4Q266 (2QDa)*, pp. 6/7, frag. 1a-b, line 1; Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 101, 147, 165–66.

**34** BT Shabbat 30b; BT Sotah 21a.

**35** Wicked in darkness: *Pesiqta de Rav Kahana* 9:1, ed. Buber, 73a; ed. Mandelbaum 1:147; English trans.: *Pesqta de Rab Kahana*, ed. Braude and Kapstein, 168–69. Simon b. Yoḥai as rainbow: *Pesiqta de Rav Kahana* 11:15, in the Buber ed. *Pesiqta* 10, 87b; ed. Mandelbaum 1:190; English trans., Braude and Kapstein, 214–15. For the rainbow as sign of the covenant see Gen 9:8–17. Simon b. Yoḥai was known for his opposition to the Romans and for hiding in a cave with his disciples while being miraculously supported by God. Some of this legend is elaborated in this *Pesiqta de Rav Kahana* 11.

**36** Green, *The Aroma of Righteousness*, 36–37, 56, 58, 62, 138–39; Green, "Sweet Spices in the Tomb."

**37** Saḥl b. Maṣṣliāḥ, *Sefer tokhaḥat in Liqutei qadmonyot*, 2:32; Saḥl b. Maṣṣliāḥ, "Epistle to Jacob b. Samuel" para. 10, in *Karaite Anthology*, 115.

**38** Hildefonis of Toledo, *De Virginitate perpetua*, chap. 44, PL 96, col. 131; Leo I, Pope, *Sermoni*, vol 2, *Sermoni del ciclo natalizio, Sermo*, 15 (XXXIV) "Item Alius de Epiphania," 15. 4.3, pp. 264/265; Leo I, Pope, *Epiphania*, Ser. XXXIV, PG 54, cols. 247–48.

other miraculous manifestations of light were common predictors of the future sanctity of children in Byzantine hagiographies.<sup>39</sup>

A number of eighth-century Muslim tombstone inscriptions request that the deceased's grave be filled with light, and Ibn Abī al-Dunyā (d. 894 CE), who recorded oral traditions and stories about the experiences of the dead within the grave, emphasized the need for the intercession of the living so that graves would be filled with light rather than darkness.<sup>40</sup> This concern over light or darkness of the tomb echoes the description in the Jewish midrash, *Pesiqta de Rav Kahana*, discussed above, although in this Muslim source, the author goes farther and uses these two contrasting possibilities as the foundation for exhorting believers to intercede on behalf of the dead. Elizabeth Fowden has demonstrated that the lamps which illuminated monasteries and churches fascinated Muslims and served as a source of inspiration for Arabic poetry both prior to and after the coming of Islam.<sup>41</sup> Lamps and candles likewise marked the sanctity of the holy dead, though at times they produced their own light devoid of human aid.<sup>42</sup>

Accounts of light emanating from the graves of Muslim saints become increasingly common from the twelfth century onwards. Such light allowed the believers to recognize a grave as that of a holy person, even when the name of the saint him or herself had been forgotten.<sup>43</sup> Light continued to be an important indicator of the sanctity of places and (dead) individuals, not merely in Islam, but also in various Christian and Jewish communities. For example, in the thirteenth-century Coptic narrative of the martyrdom of John of Phanijōit, the dead saint's indisputable righteousness is demonstrated by the descent of a heavenly lamp.<sup>44</sup> Likewise, the two twelfth-century Jewish travellers, al-Ḥarizi and Petachia of Regensburg, wrote that light or a pillar of fire descended upon the grave of Ezra the scribe in the eleventh hour.<sup>45</sup> The seventeenth-century Muslim, Yāsīn al-Biqā'i, indicates that light only ascends from the graves of the prophets, perhaps meaning to distinguish such graves from those of holy men and women lacking prophetic status.<sup>46</sup>

**39** Chevallier Caseau, "Childhood in Byzantine Saints' Lives."

**40** Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *Kitāb al-qubūr*, 72–73, nos. 8–10. In various ḥadīth, Muslims are urged to pray that the dead experience light and spaciousness in the grave. Light emanating from the grave also marked a holy person. See Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 2, *Kitāb al-Janā'iz* (Book of Funerals), nos. 2215, 2232, 2234, vol. 7, *Kitāb al-Janna wa-ṣifat na'īmihā wa-ahlihā* (Book of Paradise and the Description of its Bliss and People) no. 7216; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, vol. 3, *Kitāb al-Jihād*, no. 2523, *Kitāb al-Janā'iz* (Book of Funerals), no. 3118, vol. 5, *Kitāb al-Sunnah* (Book of Law), no. 4753; Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 25, 31, 261n38; Eklund, *Life between Death and Resurrection*, 155–56.

**41** Fowden, "The Lamp and Wine Flask."

**42** See for example Rosenqvist, *Life and Conduct of Our Holy Mother Irene*, chap. 23. For additional examples of light marking the graves of the holy Christian dead see discussion above.

**43** Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 55–56; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 22–23; Meri, "Aspects of Baraka."

**44** Zaborowski, *The Coptic Martyrdom of John of Phanijoit*, 120/121.

**45** Ḥarizi, *Taḥkemoni*, Gate 35, English: 2:208–12; Hebrew 2:46aff.; Petachia of Regensburg, *Sivuv*, 20, Petachia, *Sivuv*, in Eisenstein, *Oẓar masa'ot*, 53; Petachia in Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 79.

**46** al-Biqā'i, *Nubdha al-Laṭīfa* MS Princeton Garrett 2307Y fol. 18b; MS Khalidi Library MS 1087 fol. 70a; MS Nashashibi Library, fol. 100r. Josef Meri, citing a different manuscript of the same work in

Some European Christians noted how fire descended from heaven to light the Easter candle at the Holy Sepulchre on Holy Saturday.<sup>47</sup> Miraculous light or fire over graves continued to be an indicator of special sanctity into the early modern and modern eras.<sup>48</sup> When light did not shine spontaneously from a holy place, be it a mosque, church, or the grave of a saint, people often brought lamps or candles.<sup>49</sup> This was an annual wonder and practice of local Christians, which remained both attractive to curious outsiders (Christian or other) and a source of criticism and disbelief.<sup>50</sup>

While the appearance of miraculous light was open to accusations of falsification, Jews, Christians, and Muslims of all denominations and geographic origins understood that light, especially in relation to the dead, was a sign of special sanctity.<sup>51</sup> For this reason, tales of light over particular saints' or prophets' graves could easily be shared and co-opted by members of multiple religious groups. Criticisms and denials of such manifestations should be understood as being at least in part derived from the importance of this otherworld sign and competition between communities.

### Trees, Stones and Water

Individual trees, groves, stones, and springs had long held the potential for sanctity and were venerated for their association with a particular god, nymph, or holy person in antiquity; a practice which has continued into the modern era in North Africa,

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Damascus (Maktabat al-Asad 11386) says that the author singles out Ezra's tomb as an exception, however, I was not able to find this passage in the manuscripts available to me. My thanks to Prof. Barbara Roggema of the University of Florence for identifying the manuscripts from the Khalidi and Nashashibi libraries, both of which are available digitally through Virtual Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (vhmml.org). and discussing their content with me. On this text and other examples of light on prophets' graves see Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 21–24.

**47** Suriano, *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, chap. xix, 30; Suriano, *Treatise on the Holy Land*, chap. xix, 47–48.

**48** Ben Ami, *Saint Veneration among Jews*, 70, 76, 81, 101–2, 249, 258, 264, 286; Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam*, 1:254, 2:456–57, 729.

**49** Lamps were also used at the Holy Sepulchre. See Suriano, *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, chap. xix, Italian, 29–30; Suriano, *Treatise on the Holy Land*, 47. It is important to note that while Suriano was a Latin Christian he was describing the practices of indigenous Christians. The Muslim legalist, Ibn al-Ḥājj, writing in the fourteenth century, calls the donation of lamps and oil to mosques an innovation and a waste of money. While he protests the practice, his very objections testify to its prevalence. Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Al-Madkhal*, 1:293. All Jewish pilgrimage accounts mention Jews and Muslims lighting candles at graves or placing lamps there. See for example Moses b. Mordechai Bassola, *Mas'a R. Moshe Basulah*, 146. That Muslims also lit candles at graves, for example the graves of the biblical patriarchs and their wives (Adam, Eve, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob, and Leah), is confirmed by the Muslim pilgrim, Ibn Baṭūṭa. Ibn Baṭūṭa *Voyages*, 1:232.

**50** Armenios, *Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt*, 110–13.

**51** Miraculous light has continued to be an indication of sanctity, especially of the holy dead, for Muslims and Jews alike into the modern era. Ben Ami, *Saint Veneration among Jews*, 31; Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, 159.

the Middle East, Greece, and Central Asia among Muslims, Jews, and/or Christians.<sup>52</sup> In medieval Western Europe such practices do not seem to have endured on a large scale; however, instances such as the Christian St. Martin of Tours (316–97 CE) felling a tree sacred to the local religion, suggest that trees were part of the religious culture in these regions at one time.<sup>53</sup> Church leaders in early medieval Europe struggled to either eradicate the veneration of water sources, trees, and stones, or to co-opt them into a more Christianized context.<sup>54</sup> Caesarius of Arles (ca. 470–542 CE), for example, selected the first option, when he remonstrated with his parishioners to stop making vows or praying at fountains and trees, urging them instead to destroy Pagan shrines rather than defend or rebuild them.<sup>55</sup> Yet this was not necessarily the preferred course of action. Early in the Christianization process in Europe, it became policy to convert temples and shrines which had been consecrated to local deities into churches. The reasoning behind this approach is expressed quite clearly in a letter by Pope Gregory I (ca. 540–604 CE) to bishops Mellitus and Augustine in England. Gregory indicates that temples should not be destroyed but merely the “idols” within them.

For if the shrines are well built it is essential that they should be changed from the worship of devils to the service of the true God. When people see that their shrines are not destroyed they will be able to banish error from their hearts and be more ready to come to places they are familiar with, but now recognizing and worshipping the true God.<sup>56</sup>

From a practical standpoint, Gregory seems to have been loath to waste materials and labour by destroying a solidly constructed building. More significantly for our purposes, Gregory supposes that local habit and association of a place with worship would facilitate the transition from the indigenous religion to Christianity, if the site were claimed by the Christians. Furthermore, Gregory goes on to outline how to sub-

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**52** Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 75, 89–92; R. Taylor, “River Raptures”; Kosso and Lawton, “Women at the Fountain and the Well”; Håland, ““Take, Skamandros, my Virginity;”” Munn, “Earth and Water”; Meyers, “The Divine River”; Dunant, “Natural Water Resources and the Sacred”; Stephenson, “Villas and Aquatic Culture”; Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 116–40; Ben Ami, *Saint Veneration among Jews*, 32, 75–83; Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam*, 1: 98–118, 175–227, 238–40; Blackman, “Sacred Trees in Modern Egypt”; Halliday, “Cenotaphs and Sacred Localities”; Lymer, “Rags and Rock Art;” Dermenghem, *Le Culte des Saints*, 37, 42, 53, 109, 122–123, 130, 136–51, 195; Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, 1:56–62, 68–73, 77–79, 84–89.

**53** Severus, *Vita Martini*, chap. 13, 108/109–110/111 and Burton’s commentary, 213–15. Also see Stephenson, “Villas and Aquatic Culture.”

**54** Squatriti, *Landscape and Change*, 1–6; Cusack, *The Sacred Tree*; Flint, *The Rise of Magic*, 204–13, 254–68.

**55** Caesarius, of Arles, *Sermones*, sermon 53, 233–234; Caesarius, *Saint Caesarius of Arles: Sermons*, vol. 1, sermon 53, 263–64.

**56** “Quia si fana eadam bene constructa sunt, necesse est ut a cultu daemonum in obsequio ueri Dei debeant commutari, ut dum gens ipsa eadem fana sua non videt destrui, de corde errorem deponat, et Deum uerum cognoscens ac adorans, ad loca quae consueuit familiarius concurrat”; Bede, *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History*, chap XXX, 106/107

stitute local sacrifices, celebrations, and festivals with Christian ones.<sup>57</sup> Likewise in the late antique Eastern Mediterranean, Christian leaders wavered between eradicating non-Christian temples and religious practices and co-opting them, in part because these sites and the customs attached to them were so central to the social and agricultural, as well as religious life of the region. Aram Mardirossian, in his analysis of the *Book of Armenian Canons (Kanonagirk' Hayoc')* of Yovhannes Awjenc'i notes that Gregory the Illuminator (257–331 CE) is depicted as taking a similar approach in Armenia as Pope Gregory I in England; he constructed a martyrium in honour of John the Baptist in Bagawan, a town which had been known to be dedicated to idols, i.e. sacred to the local gods, seemingly to divert devotion from autochthonous deities to that of a Christian saint.<sup>58</sup> In Egypt of course, the focus was more frequently on water sources, specifically the Nile, than on trees.<sup>59</sup>

Biblical prohibitions against high places and Asherah poles prompted lengthy discussions in the Babylonian Talmud about what constituted Asherah trees, what could or could not be used of a tree guarded or venerated by non-Jews.<sup>60</sup> The practice of revering mountains or hills was sometimes discussed in conjunction with holy trees, indicating that Jews were well aware of this custom among other peoples.<sup>61</sup> While I have found no indication that Jews themselves thought of trees or other objects as holy in any way, or used them to mark graves during late antiquity, certain trees, such as fig, olive, and pomegranate, were considered good omens in dreams.<sup>62</sup> Trees were also thought to house demons. Anyone urinating on or resting on such trees did so at considerable risk to his/her safety.<sup>63</sup> Thus, while in late antiquity, Jews seem to have eschewed direct reverence of trees, nevertheless, already, they linked trees with the supernatural world. Among medieval Jews, however, trees, especially fruit trees, or stones frequently marked the graves of the venerated dead. Sahl b. Mašliaḥ complained that rabbinic Jews tie knots on palm trees marking the graves of holy people in hopes of having their prayers fulfilled.<sup>64</sup> His observation about rabbinic practice in the tenth century is similar to those in later medieval texts. The anonymous author of a Hebrew account from the fifteenth century noted that the graves of R. Eliezar b. Hurqanus and the graves of Ḥanina b. Dosa

**57** Bede, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, 108/109

**58** Mardirossian, *Le livre des Canons arméniens*, 179–80.

**59** Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity*, 108–10; Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 20–22, 27–33, 45–46.

**60** Judges 3:7; 1 Kings 15:13, 18:19; 2 Kings 21:7, 23:4–7; 1 Chronicles 15:16, 2 Chronicles 33:3. BT Eruvin 78b–80a, BT Sanhedrin 7b, BT Avodah Zarah 20b, 45b–46a, 48a, 52a. In some of the biblical passages Asherah is portrayed as an image of a goddess. See for example 1 Kings 15:13, 2 Kings 21:7. On the veneration of Asherah in ancient Israel see Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah*; Frevel, *Aschera*; Frevel, “Die Elimination der Göttin.”

**61** BT Avodah Zarah 45b–46a.

**62** BT Berachot 57a.

**63** BT Pesachim 111a–b.

**64** Sahl b. Mašliaḥ, *Sefer tokhaḥat in Liqutei qadmoniyot*, 2:32; Sahl b. Mašliaḥ, “Epistle to Jacob b. Samuel” para. 10, in *Karaite Anthology*, 115–16.

have trees growing over them.<sup>65</sup> R. Moshe Basulah from the same period explained that the graves of R. Judah b.'Il'a'i and R. Josi, his son, were shaded by an almond tree and that nearby is a grove of olive trees that "are holy to the saint". Other kinds of trees, such as carob and pistachio trees mark the graves of other rabbis' graves.<sup>66</sup>

Whether the veneration of trees or sacred groves was a pre-Islamic practice among Arabs or a custom that they adopted later as the result of contact with other cultures after expansion, remains unclear. Some scholars seem to favour the idea that they adopted it from other cultures with which they had contact.<sup>67</sup> Others, often taking their cue from medieval (or modern) Islamic texts which condemn such practices as part of pre-Islamic "polytheism," assume that the veneration of trees or the use of trees to mark a sacred grave or other site must be a pre-Islamic holdover from Arabia.<sup>68</sup> Regardless of its origins, this practice became common within the Islamic world and a source of contention. The custom of praying near trees or stones was sufficiently widespread among Muslims for Ibn Taymiyya to complain in the fourteenth century:

On the other hand, retreat and cleaving near a tree or stone where there may or may not be an image, just as near a tomb or station of a prophet or non-prophet, is not part of Islamic religion, but is rather a variety of pagan cult.<sup>69</sup>

Ibn Taymiyya's reference to trees, tombs, or "stations" (places marking the person's life) of prophets or "non-prophets" hints that Muslims visited the holy places of individuals not recognized as prophets, and, potentially, not even Muslim. Scholars examining Ottoman or late North African sources and customs confirm that such practices continued despite the protestations of Ibn Taymiyya and likeminded Muslim legal scholars.<sup>70</sup> For example, the Muslim traveller and author of a guide for those going on *ziyārāt* in and around Damascus, Ibn al-Ḥawrānī (d. 1596 CE), notes that one Shaykh Arṣlān dug a well with his bare hands at the mosque near his house. It became part of his "station," and at the time of al-Ḥawrānī's narrative, people drank from it to receive blessing and cures for stomach ache.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, as late as the fifteenth century, Joan of Arc (ca. 1412–1431 CE) was accused, among other illicit activities, of going to a tree thought to attract fairies in

**65** *Masa'ot 'Erez Yisra'el*, ed. Ya'ari, 113.

**66** *Masa'ot 'Erez Yisra'el*, ed. Ya'ari, 139. The grave of Zebulon is marked by two pillars and a carob tree (p. 136) and a pistachio tree grows on R. Eleazar b. 'Azariah's grave (p. 141).

**67** Santolli, "Harrar, the Holy City of Islam," esp. 632–33; Schöller, *The Living and the Dead in Islam*, 183–85; Dermenghem, *Le Culte des Saints*, 21–37.

**68** Procházka-Eisl and Procházka, *The Plain of Saints and Prophets*, 163–66; Rustomji, *The Garden and the Fire*, 3; Zeitlin, *The Historical Muhammad*, 31; Ben-Ami, *Saint Veneration among Jews*, 75, 81n1.

**69** فأما العكوف والمجاورة عند شجرة أو حجر، تمتال أو غير تمتال، أو العكوف، والمجاورة عند قبر نبي أو غير نبي، أو مقام نبي أو غير نبي... فليس هذا من دين المسلمين. بل هو من جنس دين المشركين... Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtīḍa'* Arabic, 441, English translation, 320. Compare with Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'*, 27:113, 136–37, 250, 500, 501; Olesen, *Culte des Saints*, 45–48; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 186.

**70** Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 116–40; Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam*, 1:98–112, 175–17, 238–20, 2:407 Dermenghem, *Le Culte des Saints*, 122–51.

**71** Ibn al-Ḥawrānī *Al-Ishārāt*, 89, translated in Meri, "A Late Medieval Syrian Pilgrimage Guide," 51.

order to obtain visions. In her trial she describes the tree as also having fountain near it from which people would drink in hopes of being healed of fevers. This exchange suggests that trees and sources of water in Northern Europe also retained their association with the other world, albeit in an unofficial capacity.<sup>72</sup>

While the treatment of trees, rocks, caves, and water sources as holy or as indicators of hallowed space, was contested periodically in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, these types of landmarks continued to be an integral part of a shared, sacred geography. The ancient origins of these practices—prior to the development of at least two of the religious traditions under consideration here—made them particular targets for condemnation as foreign hold-overs, inimical to “true” Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. Yet precisely because of their antiquity they also became an inherited, albeit transformed, custom for communities of Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. This is not to say that they were part of an unchanging Mediterranean religious culture—indeed, rituals and religious associations relating to trees, rocks, caves, and springs span far wider geographically than the Mediterranean—rather, it is to follow the observations of Frankfurter and other scholars of ritual who have emphasized the primacy of practice over belief.<sup>73</sup> While medieval authors would not have formulated this principle in the same terms as modern anthropologists or theorists of religion, they understood it. Some sites remained religiously important, despite the shift in religious (belief) systems, and were merely co-opted by the “newcomers.”<sup>74</sup> Other groves or stones came to be designated as holy and accorded similar powers and meanings because to venerate such places, or associate them with other-worldly power, whether from a god, a demon, or a saint, was already in the vocabulary and expectations of a given religious tradition; the groundwork for such attitudes and behaviour had already been established by those sites and rituals inherited from a more ancient period. Because they were part of a common “inheritance,” sacred trees, stones, etc. in turn became part of a mutual, though not always identical, religious symbolism which encouraged shared devotion.

## Veneration of the Special Dead

### Christian Borrowing from Greek and Roman Rituals

*Parentalia* (February 22) and *Lemuria* (May 9, 11, 13) were the two main Roman festivals of the dead. During *Parentalia* individuals honoured their ancestors; mourners would go out of the city to the cemeteries to visit family tombs, offering the dead garlands, corn, salt, wine-soaked bread, and loose violets.<sup>75</sup> *Lemuria*, on the other hand, seems to have been more about propitiating and protecting one’s family against the hostile dead that

<sup>72</sup> Daniel Hobbins, transl., *The Trial of Joan of Arc*, 62, 74, 126–17, 157.

<sup>73</sup> Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 404–11, 422, 423, 436–60; Chaniotis, “Ritual Dynamics”; Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 23–36.

<sup>74</sup> Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 47, 49–51, 64–65.

<sup>75</sup> Ovid *Fasti*, 2.537; Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 1:50; Scullard, *Festivals and Ceremonies*, 74, 118–19.

roamed free in the world of the living, rather than honouring the beloved dead.<sup>76</sup> The ancient Greek festival of the third day of Athesteria (day of the pots) addressed both concerns. The living provided an offering of vegetables to the god of the underworld on behalf of the dead, much as Romans did during *Parentalia*, however, the offering was for all the dead, and the day was associated with ill omen.<sup>77</sup>

Much to the frustration of early Christian leaders, many Christians continued these “Pagan” practices, such as visiting the tombs of ancestors, eating or feasting at gravesites, or celebrating specific holidays relating to the dead. As Peter Brown points out, Christians often saw no contradiction between their affiliation to Christianity and the continuation of these customs.<sup>78</sup> Not surprisingly, aspects of these rituals for honouring the dead in general were incorporated into the veneration of the holy dead.<sup>79</sup>

### **Body, Soul, and Intercession for and from the Grave: Convergences in Eastern Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Thought**

A number of biblical injunctions would seem to preclude Jews’ visiting gravesites, interceding for the dead, and certainly, asking the dead for intercession. According to Lev. 11:24 and Num. 19:14–16 corpses were impure, an impurity which the *Mishnah* and Talmuds expanded upon, making corpse impurity the worst of all—the “father of the fathers of impurity” (אבי אבות הטומאה).<sup>80</sup> To go so far as to revere the dead or request favours of the deceased would also potentially violate Ex. 20:3–4 and Deut. 5:7–8 which prohibit the Israelites from worshiping any other gods, idols, or other (natural) objects. BT Mo’ed Qaṭan contains a lengthy discussion about how to identify gravesites and avoid them in order to circumvent the impurity that walking upon those graves would incur.<sup>81</sup> The desire to avoid corpse pollution would certainly seem to be a likely deterrent against unnecessarily visiting a cemetery. David Kraemer, in his study of death rituals among Jews in late antiquity, points out that unlike their non-Jewish Roman counterparts, Rabbinic Jews hosted the funerary meal at the home of the mourner, rather

**76** Scullard, *Festivals and Ceremonies*, 118–19 Ovid, *Fasti*, 5.419–55.

**77** Nilsson, *Greek Folk Religion*, 30–31; Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians*, 116.

**78** Augustine of Hippo, *Epistle* 29.9; Jerome, *Contra Vigilantium*, 4, PL 23, 357; Martin of Braga, *Capitula ex Orientalium*, nos. 68, 69, 71, 73 in *Opera Omnia*, 140; Hincmar of Rheims, *Capitula*, xiv, *Mansi*, XV, 478, in *Opera*; Burchard of Worms, *Decretum* X, XIX, PL 140, cols. 838, 964; Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 26–29, 31–36; Février, “Le Culte des morts,” 1:212–74; Flint, *The Rise of Magic*, 213–14, 269–71; Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, 32–33. However, see the cautionary remarks in Geary, *Living with the Dead*, 30–34, in which Geary questions whether one can neatly distinguish between “Christian” and “Pagan” burial practices and beliefs. He is mostly referring to Germanic practices but his observations hold for the intermingling of Greek, Roman, and Christian views of the dead as well.

**79** Flint, *The Rise of Magic*, 269–20.

**80** M. Ohalot 1:1–3, 6:1; BT Shabbat 81a; Harrington, *The Impurity Systems*, 37–40, 69, 72–75, 143; D. Kraemer, *The Meanings of Death*, 19–20, 25, 28, 77; Cohn, “Sainthood on the Periphery.”

**81** BT Mo’ed Qaṭan 5b.

than at the grave of the deceased.<sup>82</sup> Given that Jews held many other practices relating to death in common with the Romans, the choice not to hold a meal at the gravesite may reflect discomfort with proximity to the dead and their impurity.<sup>83</sup>

Within Hellenistic and Rabbinic Jewish texts, the living and the holy dead were needed to assist other, troubled dead, or they themselves required aid from the living. Already in 2 Maccabees 12:40–45 (written ca. 124 BCE) when Jews who had fallen in battle were found to have been carrying tokens of the idol of Jamnia, Judas Maccabeus prayed that their sin be blotted out and forgiven, and he sent a sin offering to Jerusalem. This text clearly indicates a belief that the prayers of the living could assist the dead, specifically, that they could expiate an individual's misdeeds even from the grave.<sup>84</sup> Sometimes such assistance could only be proffered by one dead person to another. For example, in a passage from BT Hagigah, when Aḥer, an individual recognized by his contemporaries as having sinned, but at the same time as being meritorious for having studied Torah, died, smoke came from his grave. R. Joḥanan laments his and his colleagues' inability to help Aḥer while he lived, but promises that when he himself dies, he will extinguish the fire. When R. Joḥanan dies the smoke does indeed cease to rise from Aḥer's grave.<sup>85</sup> Aḥer needs assistance because he is being punished in the grave. This story is one of several tales or discussions in the Talmud of the pains of the grave. These pains usually consisted of gnawing of the worms during decomposition, which atoned for sins, however, sometimes, when the sins were severe, additional punishments could be added as in the case of Aḥer.<sup>86</sup>

The choices of the living in preparing and burying the corpse sometimes caused additional trouble to the dead. BT Sanhedrin 47a warns against interring a righteous person next to a wicked one, or even a moderately wicked person next to a very sinful one. In BT Berakoth 18b, a woman cannot join her companion in wandering the world of the living and listening to them because her body is not properly wrapped.<sup>87</sup>

The beliefs about the dead expressed in the Talmud and earlier Hellenistic Jewish texts find parallels in early Muslim and Eastern Christian beliefs. Eastern, particularly Syriac-speaking, Christian views of the relationship between the body and the soul and the differentiation between the soul which either remained with the body or in separate resting place, and the spirit which went to God, probably developed alongside Jewish

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**82** Kraemer, *The Meanings of Death*, 32.

**83** For a brief overview of commonalities between Roman and Jewish attitudes and practices relating to death see Kraemer, *The Meanings of Death*, 69–71.

**84** For an overview of other early Jewish accounts of interactions between the living and the dead and the expectation that the living take care of the needs of the dead, who, on some level remained aware after death, see Kraemer, *The Meanings of Death*, 14–28, 65, 68, 97–98, 102–3, 113; LeGoff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, 26–27, 30–33, 39–43.

**85** BT Ḥagigah 15b. Compare with the tale of Judah b. Tabbai prostrating himself on the grave of an executed man in BT Ḥagigah 16b.

**86** BT Sanhedrin 47b, BT Berakoth 18b; Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 255; Kraemer, *The Meanings of Death*, 24–27, 46–47, 97–98, 103–5; Gavin, "The Sleep of the Soul."

**87** BT Berakoth 18b; Kraemer, *The Meanings of Death*, 108–10.

ones or were influenced by them.<sup>88</sup> Tatian (ca. 120–180 CE) maintained that the soul disintegrated with the body until resurrection, at which point the body and soul would be redeemed by the Spirit or punished.<sup>89</sup> The Christian author, Aphrahat, thought that the animating spirit (in contrast to the immortal soul) remained with the body after death. If the person had been righteous, s/he had pleasant dreams of what God held in store for the person at the final resurrection, whereas the unrighteous were tormented by unpleasant dreams.<sup>90</sup> Aphrahat's contemporary, Ephraim the Syrian (or his imitator) held that the soul slept with the body, waiting when both would be revived.<sup>91</sup> As both Frank Gavin and Leor Halevi point out, an important difference between early Syrian Christian and Jewish belief is that Jews maintained that the person physically suffered in the grave, rather than the more intangible nightmares of the wicked in Aphrahat.<sup>92</sup> Whether or not the soul was separated from the body, its location between death and the day of resurrection and the extent and manner of the soul's perceptions, punishments, or interactions with the living continued to be debated among Syrian Orthodox and the Church of the East, however, as one may see from the carefully outlined discussion of Moses bar Kepha (ca. 813–903 CE)<sup>93</sup>

Examining both late antique Greek and Latin Christian sources, Yvette Duval has shown that many believed that the dead could feel pain and benefited from proximity to the holy dead, not merely in a distant end of times, but during the occupancy of the tomb. Presumption of a person's worthiness to be near a martyr or other holy person, could, however, result in the worsening of punishment after death rather than alleviation.<sup>94</sup> Not all agreed, as we shall see.

While scholars have speculated about the possible influence of Eastern Christian belief on Muslim concepts of the dead, various standard ḥadīth collections explicitly recognize Jewish influence regarding the soul's connection to the body in the grave, particularly its punishment, although other Jewish practices regarding the dead, such as standing until the body was placed in the grave, are rejected.<sup>95</sup> The dead suffered in the

**88** Gavin, "The Sleep of the Soul."

**89** Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos*, chap. 25; Gavin, "The Sleep of the Soul."

**90** Aphraates, "Des Membres de l'Ordre" and "De La Vivification des Morts," in Aphraates, *Exposés*, I/293, I/396–I/397; Gavin "The Sleep of the Soul"; Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 224; Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body*, 73–75.

**91** Ephraem Syrus, *Sancti Ephraemi Syri Carmina Nisibena*, XLVII; Gavin, "The Sleep of the Soul." More broadly on Ephraim and other early Eastern Christian authors' view of bodily resurrection and the meaning of death and corruption: Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body*, 75–86.

**92** Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 224; Gavin, "The Sleep of the Soul."

**93** Moses bar Kepha, *Moses bar Kepha und sein Buch*, chaps. 32–39, pp. 100–124; Gavin, "The Sleep of the Soul."

**94** Duval, *Auprès des saints corps*, 37–39, 51–168.

**95** al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 2, bk. 16, nos. 1049, 1050, 1055, 1056, bk. 23, nos. 1289, 1292, 1369, 1372, 1373, 1375, 1377, vol. 4, bk. 56, nos. 2822, 2823, vol. 5, bk. 64, no. 3978, vol. 6, bk. 65, no. 4707, vol. 8, bk. 78, nos. 6052, 6055, bk. 80, nos. 6364–6368, 6370, 6374–6377, 6390; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 2, Kitāb al-masājid wa mawāḍi' al-ṣalāt nos. 1319, 1320, 1321, 1322, 1324, 1325, 1326, 1328, 1329, 1332, 1333, Kitāb al-kusūf (Book of Eclipses) no. 2098, vol. 5, Kitāb al-imārah (Book of Leadership)

grave according to their sins, although that suffering could sometimes be alleviated by the actions or prayers of the living. Muslims, like Jews, maintained that being buried next to the holy dead could benefit an individual in the afterlife, although the righteous dead did not like being buried next to the wicked. The groans or stench of the wicked disturbed the holy dead, even as proximity to dead saints made the wicked uncomfortable, though even the “regular dead” were often rendered uncomfortable by the worms of the grave.<sup>96</sup>

This concern about the fate and comfort of the dead in their graves continued in the Fatimid through the Mamluk periods and is evident among Jews in both Europe and the Middle East during the same time span. The Persian mystic and philosopher, al-Ghazālī (ca. 1058–1111 CE), maintained that the soul’s comfort or discomfort as it rested in the grave with its body depended on its ability to answer the questioning of the angels, Munkar and Nakīr; however, the first stages of the soul’s judgment and afterlife began in the grave.<sup>97</sup> Medieval Jews recounted tales of the righteous disturbing the wicked and *vice versa*, or warnings against burying those who had hated one another in life next to one another in death, as well as affirming the ability and importance of intercession for and by the dead.<sup>98</sup> We have already seen the example from *Sefer Ḥasidim* in which

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no. 4938, vol. 7, Kitāb al-qadar, nos. 6770, 6771, 6772, 6871, 6873, Kitāb al-dhikr wa al-du ‘ā, nos. 6907, 6908, Kitāb al-janna wa šifat na‘imihā wa ahlihā, (Book of Paradise and description of its pleasures and people) nos. 7213, 7214, 7219, 7220; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, vol. 1, Kitāb al-ṭahārah (Book of Purity), no. 22, Kitāb al-ṣalāt (Book of Prayer), no. 880, 983, 984, vol. 2, Kitāb al-withr (Book of Softening), nos. 1539, 1540, 1542, vol. 3, Kitāb al-Janā‘iz (Book of Funerals) nos. 3128, 3202, vol. 5, Kitāb al-sunnah (Book of law), nos. 4751, 4753, Kitāb al-adab (Book of Etiquette) no. 5070. Andrae, *Muhammad*, 89; Reynolds, “Medieval Islamic Polemic”; Halevi, *Muhammad’s Grave*, 224–25, 334n98. Muslim ideas about the potential impurity of corpses superficially resemble those of Jews and Zoroastrians. As Marion Holmes Katz, shows, however, Sunni Muslims were ambivalent about the impurity of corpses, especially those of Muslims. Corpses never conferred the degree of impurity attributed to them by either Jews or Zoroastrians. Katz, *Body of the Text*, 155–57, 171–74, 205–6.

**96** Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 1, bk. 3, no. 33, bk.4, nos. 216, 218, vol. 2, bk.23, no. 1378, vol. 5, bk.63, no. 3855, vol. 8, bk.78, no. 6052, 6055, bk.81, no. 6558, 6564, 6566, 6570, vol. 9, bk.97, nos. 7509–7510; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 2, Kitāb al-Janā‘iz (Book of Funerals) nos. 2215, 2232, 2234, vol.6, Kitāb al-Faḍā‘il (Book of Merits) no. 5940, vol. 7, Kitāb al-zuhd, (Book of Asceticism) no. 7518; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, vol. 1, Kitāb al-ṭahārah (Book of Purity), no. 20, vol. 3, Kitāb al-Janā‘iz (Book of Funerals), no. 3203, 3221, vol. 5, Kitāb al-sunnah (Book of Law), no. 4673, 4740, Malik, *Muwaṭṭa*, bk.12, no. 12.1.13, 12.2.4, bk.16, no. 16.6.18, 16.12.37; Malik, *Muwaṭṭa* (Arabic) Kitāb Ṣalāt al-Kusūf, pp. 84–85, Kitāb al-Janā‘iz, pp. 105, 107; Smith and Haddad, *Islamic Understanding of Death*, 31–61; Halevi, *Muhammad’s Grave*, 197–233; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 5:130–31, 182–87; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 10, 47–55; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 17, 35–36, 65–66; Meri, “Aspects of Baraka”; Goldziher, “Veneration of the Saints in Islam”; Grunebaum, “The Sacred Character of Islamic Cities”; Eklund, *Life between Death and Resurrection*, 3–9, 14, 30–38, 41, 45–51, 53–55, 78, 104–5, 111, 120, 137–40, 148–53.

**97** al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā’ [Kitāb Dhikr al-mawt wa-mā ba’dahu]*, chaps.7–8] 5:97–120; al-Ghazzālī. *The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife*, 121–169. Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 209–10; Rustomji, *The Garden and the Fire*, 106.

**98** “Zavva’at rabbeinu Yehudah ha-Ḥasid,” in *Sefer Ḥasidim*, ed. Margolioth, paras. 1, 12, pp. 10, 12, *Sefer Ḥasidim*, paras. 223, 241, 450, 452, 705, 710, pp. 202, 212–13, 310, 312–313, 439, 440;

the righteous dead complained about the stench of the wicked buried in the adjoining grave.<sup>99</sup> In another tale from the same work, the situation of BT Berakoth 18b is retold of a woman's soul restricted to her grave because of lack of proper clothing. The consequences are different in this medieval text from the Talmudic one, however. Rather than inhibiting her from wandering the earth and listening to the living, this woman is prevented from joining the other dead in interceding for the living.<sup>100</sup> This particular tale points to mutual relationship between the living and the dead. The living lose the benefit of the deceased young woman's prayers until they intervene to help her by clothing and burying her properly. Similarly, the poem attributed to Moses b. Mevorakh urges the protagonist to seek his dead mother's intercession, but also implies that his regular visits and attention are needed in return.<sup>101</sup> Thus, the dead required from the living both the prayers and sometimes physical assistance for more practical matters, such as correct burial or company and remembrance.

Medieval Muslims were similarly anxious that their loved ones be buried next to the holy dead, and fearful of the discomfort that might be caused by proximity to evildoers' graves.<sup>102</sup> Evidence from thirteenth-century Muslim epitaphs suggests that as for Jews and Christians from the period, living Muslims were expected to pray for comfort and divine mercy on behalf of the dead.<sup>103</sup> The Egyptian Shāfi'ī scholar, al-Subkī (d. 1355 CE), justified the practice of *ziyāra*, the visitation of graves or other holy sites besides Mecca, in order to pray for the dead and to pay respect to them. He further assured his readers that the dead were aware of the greetings of the living.<sup>104</sup> Individuals regularly requested that they be buried next to a holy person in order to benefit from his/her blessing, or *baraka*, as they waited in the grave for the final judgment.<sup>105</sup>

### Body, Soul, and the Intercession of the Dead in Latin Christendom

The relationship between the soul and body and the potential impact of both the dead on the living and the living on the dead, preoccupied early Latin-speaking Christians as well. Paulinus of Nola (d. 431 CE) asked Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE) “whether it is

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Horowitz, “Speaking to the Dead”; Shoham-Steiner, “For a Prayer in the Place Would Be Most Welcome”; Cuffel, “Between Reverence and Fear”.

**99** *Sefer Ḥasidim*, ed. Margolioth, para. 705, p. 439. See above in the section on smell and incorruptibility.

**100** *Sefer Ḥasidim*, ed. Margolioth para. 452, p. 311. Compare with *Sefer Ḥasidim*, ed. Wistinetzki and Freimann, para. 1543, p. 378.

**101** Moses b. Mevorakh, “Ve-at haiti be'ozeri ke-mageni” (“And you were for my help like my shield”), in *Shirim ḥadashim min ha-genizah*, 101

**102** Ibn Abī Ḥajalah, *Jiwār al-akhyār fī dār al-qarār*. MS Princeton, Garrett 1151Y, fol. 44a–b; Ibid. Landberg MS 110, fol. 63a. Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 47–49.

**103** Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 40–41.

**104** al-Subkī, *Shifā' al-saqām*, 86–88; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 202–3.

**105** Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Kitāb al-Kawākib*, 105, 125, 140, 157, 297–298; Al-Sakhāwī, *Tuḥfat*, 231–33, 254, 263, 276, Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 48–51.

useful to anyone to have his body buried near the memorial of any saint.”<sup>106</sup> Augustine, in his point by point reply, insists that the body has no ability to sense after death.<sup>107</sup> Funerals aid the grieving and honour the dead—if done in a quiet manner—but the dead sense nothing if the graves are damaged. The location of the graves are important aides to memory and piety but are not in and of themselves important.<sup>108</sup> While the dead were generally unaware of and uninterested in the affairs of the living, martyrs knew of the situation of the living and interceded for them by a miracle of God. The place where one asked for such intercession was ultimately irrelevant since God was everywhere.<sup>109</sup>

Here and in other writings, Augustine resembles some of the later (post fourth-century) Eastern Christian authors in separating the soul from the body after death, and maintaining that so separated, the souls could be punished for sins with the eventual aim of redemption. Unlike the early Syriac Christian Aphrahat or Ephraim the Syrian, discussed above, the place of waiting is not the body itself. Other early Christian authors such as Tertullian (ca. 160–220 CE) and Ambrose (ca. 337–397 CE) likewise imagined the soul to be punished and purged before the last judgment. For this reason, the living should pray for the dead.<sup>110</sup> Thus, while Jews, early Christians, and Muslims lauded praying on behalf of the dead to alleviate punishments for sins, the basic pretext was different. For Jews and Muslims, the soul, the presence of the person, was inextricably linked to the body, and, by extension, to the grave which it occupied. To be near a person’s grave was to be near the person him/herself, even after death. To harm the corpse hurt the person. For this reason, perhaps, Jews and Muslims did not develop an extensive cult of corporeal relics of their holy dead.<sup>111</sup> For Byzantine Christians, the presence of the holy dead was evoked by their icons, although the burial place of a saint also drew supplicants.<sup>112</sup> Of course, if Western Christians felt free to divide the bodies of saints after their death, the better to distribute relics, because they believed the body to be insensate and unconnected with the soul, the question arises, why would such relics be important to the faithful? Paulinus’ questions hint at the answer. While Augustine worked hard to convince his co-religionist that physical proximity to the martyrs’ tombs

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**106** “...utrum prosit cuique post mortem quod corpus ejus apud sancti alicujus Memoriam sepelitur.” Augustine of Hippo, *De Cura Gerenda pro mortuis* I.1

**107** Augustine of Hippo, *De Cura Gerenda pro mortuis* II, IV.6–VI.8; Augustine of Hippo, *De Civitate Dei*, bk. XXI, chap. 3; Binski, *Medieval Death*, 16.

**108** Augustine of Hippo, *De Cura Gerenda pro mortuis* IV.6–V.7. Compare with Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, bk. I, chaps. 12–13; Rose, *Commentary*, xv, 31–33, 63–64, 98, 117, 177–78, 187, 216, 557–60.

**109** Augustine of Hippo, *De Cura Gerenda pro mortuis* VI.8, XIII.16–XVI.19; Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages*, 20–22; Rose, *Commentary*, 188–91, 206, 207. On the insensate status of the “normal” dead see references to Rose in the previous note.

**110** Rose, *Commentary*, 26–29; Gavin, “The Sleep of the Soul”; LeGoff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, 32–33, 46–48, 62–85.

**111** Some relics in the form of “pieces” of the dead did/do exist in Islam: the heads of John the Baptist in Damascus and Aleppo; the head of Husayn in Damascus. Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 39, 200–201; Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus*, 108, 132.

**112** Gerstel and Talbot, “The Culture of Lay Piety”; Binski, *Medieval Death*, 25–26; Brubaker, “Making and Breaking”; Miller, *Corporeal Imagination*, 6–9, 15, 113–33, 138–47, 155, 165–67.

afforded no particular blessing or efficacy in prayers, and he insisted that the dead were uninterested in the living and unable to haunt them, the fact that Paulinus, a high-ranking Christian in his own right, asked these questions suggests that Christians very much felt that the dead interacted with the living, and that the bodies of the holy dead served as a powerful locus of a saint's power. Indeed, Paula Rose, in her study and contextualization of Augustine's *De Cura pro mortuis gerenda ad Paulinum*, and before her, Yvette Duval, show that Paulinus and others of his circle felt very much that burying one's loved ones *ad sanctos*, "near" or "next to saints", would benefit the deceased family member or friend. Proximity to the holy dead was also seen as beneficial to the living. In *De Cura* and other writings, Augustine sought to refute such beliefs, although he did allow that martyrs—the holy dead—could intercede for the living.<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, the persistence of western Christian practices such as incubation, pilgrimage, and relic gathering indicate that most Christians continued to believe in the connection between the holy (and even not so holy) dead and their bodies.<sup>114</sup> Such attitudes approximate those of the Jews, Muslims, and some Eastern Christians, however, the focus on the body parts of saints as objects of devotion remained a distinguishing feature. Expressions of abhorrence and mockery for Christians' veneration of saints by European Jews, despite their own practices of praying at the graves of the holy dead, need, perhaps, to be understood in light of Jewish rejection of the veneration of the bodies of Christian saints, rather than to an objection to the belief that the dead could intercede for the living.<sup>115</sup>

Nuances distinguished not merely interreligious but also intra-religious belief among the various communities about the dead. Nevertheless, the shared impulse

**113** Rose, *Commentary*, 13–16, 19, 21–22, 30–43, 48–51, 60–65, 68–71, 78, 83, 95–96, 98, 104, 117, 438–40; Duval, *Auprès des morts*, 3–21, 51–191.

**114** Binski, *Medieval Death*, 22–28, 71, 74, 93–94, 115–16; Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages*; Geary, *Furta Sacra*.

**115** On this seeming contradiction and Jewish objections to Christians' veneration of the dead while they themselves visited the graves of martyrs and other holy dead see: Shoham-Steiner, "For a Prayer in the Place Would Be Most Welcome." In fact European Jewish rejections of Christian veneration of Jesus or the dead often specifically single out corpses in their polemic. Yannai, *Mahazor*, vol. 2, poem 109, line 22, p. 38, poem 119, line 78, p. 87, poem 135, line 46, 48, p. 127, poem for Yom Kippur, lines 145–46, p. 221; Joseph ben Nathan Official, *Yosef ha-mekane*, paras. 119, 125, pp. 110, 114; *Nizḥon Yashan*, para. 125, Heb., p. 82, Engl. p. 134, para. 145, Heb., 96, Engl. 153, para. 176, Heb., 123–24, Engl. 185–87, para. 202, Heb. 141, Engl., 202; "Mainz Anonymous" in Habermann, *Sefer Gezirot*, 62, 92, 93, 98, 101, English in Chazan, *European Jewry*, 225, 229, 234, 237, 238; *Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson* in *Sefer Gezirot*, 29, 31, 34–36, 39, 43, 47–48, English in Chazan, *European Jewry*, 251, 255, 258, 260, 261, 266, 272, 280; *Chronicle of Eliezar ben Nathan* in Habermann, *Sefer Gezirot*, 74, 79, 80, English in Eidelberg, *Jews and the Crusaders*, 82, 86, 90; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 5, 82, 132–34. Also see the *Toledot Yeshu* tradition, in which Jesus' ignominious death and the status of his corpse is emphasized. The *Toledot Yeshu* narrative circulated in both Europe and the Middle East. See Meerson and Schäfer, ed. and transl., *Toledot Yeshu: The Life Story of Jesus*; Barbu and Deutsch, *Toledoth Yeshu in Context*; Deutsch, "New Evidence"; Goldstein, "A Polemical Tale"; Goldstein, "Judeo-Arab Versions." To say that European Jewish customs of asking intercessions at the graves of the dead are primarily due to Christian influence, as Shoham-Steiner seems to argue, is incorrect. These practices were as widespread in the Middle East as they were in Europe.

toward pilgrimage coupled with strong similarities in expectations of mutual assistance between the living and the holy dead and in the continued connection of the soul of the dead with his/her body, were concepts that were comprehensible to Jews, Christians, and Muslims, whether from Western Europe, Byzantium, or the Muslim world. Whether or not each of these beliefs was accepted by religious leaders varied. Their prevalence, again, ensured common ground between religious communities which fostered hybrid or shared practice.

### **The Dead Benefiting the Living: Intersections between Muslim and Jewish Rituals, Expectations and Anxieties**

According to Muslims and Jews of both the Middle East and Western Europe, not only could the living intercede for the dead, the dead, especially the holy dead, could intercede on behalf of the living and benefit the other dead.<sup>116</sup> Gravesites served as major loci for living Jews to seek guidance and aid, sometimes directly from the dead themselves, or from articles associated with a particular holy dead person, and sometimes from God via the intercession of the dead. Scattered references in Hellenistic and early Roman Jewish sources suggest that the tombs of the prophets were destinations for pilgrimage.<sup>117</sup> In the Talmud, the rabbis argued for the antiquity of the practice of praying at gravesites, citing Num. 13:22 according to which Caleb visits Hebron, where the Patriarchs and Matriarchs were buried. BT Sotah 34b elaborates on the biblical passage suggesting that Caleb prostrated himself on the graves of the Patriarchs in order to request the prayers of his ancestors on his behalf.<sup>118</sup> Indications become more numerous and detailed during the rabbinic and medieval periods.<sup>119</sup> For example, BT Sahnhedrin indicates that sometimes quasi magical practices, such as taking dirt from the grave of a rabbi and using it as a remedy against fever, were condoned and legal justifications developed to allow their continuation.<sup>120</sup> Conjuring or consulting with the dead by fasting and sleeping in a cemetery were less acceptable, however, discussions of such customs in the Talmud indicate that they were, nevertheless, practised by some.<sup>121</sup>

Travelling to cemeteries, sleeping in them, and attempting to consult the dead remained a source of concern in medieval Jewish communities in Northern Europe and in the Muslim world. Karaite and Rabbinite Jews in the Middle East disagreed about the valid-

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**116** Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 5:180–85; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 40–41, 71–76; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 59–119; Horowitz, “Speaking to the Dead.”

**117** Kerkeslager, “Jewish Pilgrimage and Jewish Identity.”

**118** Horowitz, “Speaking to the Dead”; Shoham-Steiner, “For a Prayer in the Place Would Be Most Welcome.”

**119** Horowitz, “Speaking for the Dead.”

**120** BT Sanhedrin 47b.

**121** BT Sanhedrin 65b. Kraemer underscores that early rabbinic texts indicate mourning and approaching the dead involved speaking *of* the dead, but not *to* the dead despite evidence that the dead were thought to be aware of their fate and the actions of the living on their behalf. Kraemer, *The Meanings of Death*, 99–103.

ity of such customs.<sup>122</sup> These practices were popular, however, and Jews sought to reshape Talmudic and biblical injunctions against such customs in the medieval and early modern eras.<sup>123</sup> For example, Maimonides, the Jewish philosopher, community leader, and law commentator of the twelfth century who emigrated from al-Andalus to Cairo, described the practice of fasting and going to the cemetery in order that the dead may visit the (living) person in a dream or dress in a particular way and burn incense and sleep along to encourage the dead to speak in the person's dreams.<sup>124</sup> In the *Zohar*, one of the primary Jewish mystical works of thirteenth-century Iberia, those buried at Hebron serve as ultimate intercessors before God during the world's distress and the conduit for God's mercy, a view that continued to be echoed by European Jews into the eighteenth century.<sup>125</sup>

The mutual intercession between the living and the dead was so significant within the Muslim context, that cemeteries frequently had a substantial population of living Muslims, who either dwelt near a particular holy person's grave more-or-less permanently or chose to remain for a period of time the better to benefit from the *baraka* of one or more saints buried there. This function of cemeteries to house those seeking intercession, at least temporarily, even affected the architecture of tombs, at least in Egypt.<sup>126</sup> Hagiographic texts and pilgrimage guides abound with accounts of miracles on behalf of the living by the dead or as a result of their intercession to God.<sup>127</sup> Yet, both Muslim and Jewish thinkers were concerned with the correct way to seek the assistance of the dead, and some questioned its legality altogether. Many Muslims, such as Ibn Taymiyya, simply condemned pilgrimage to the graves of the dead in order to seek their intercession as a blatant imitation of *dhimmi* practice that no Muslim should adopt.<sup>128</sup> Others presented a more gradated argument. Al-Subkī, responding to Ibn Taymiyya's objections to *ziyāra*,

**122** Sahl b. Maṣliḥ, *Sefer tokhaḥat in Liqṭei qadmoniyot*, 32; Sahl b. Maṣliḥ, "Epistle to Jacob b. Samuel" para. 10, in *Karaite Anthology*, 115–16; Horowitz, "Speaking for the Dead."

**123** Rashi (R. Shlomo Yizḥaq of Troyes) on BT Sanhedrin 75b; Eliezer b. Samuel of Metz, *Sefer Yere'im*, no. 335; Moses b. Maimon, *Mishnah Torah*, "Hilkhot 'avodat kokhavim" (laws regarding the worship of stars) chap. 11, law 13. Horowitz, "Speaking to the Dead"; Giller, "Recovering the Sanctity of the Galilee"; Shoham-Steiner, "For a Prayer in the Place Would Be Most Welcome" (my thanks to Prof. Caroline Walker Bynum of the Institute of Advanced Studies in Princeton and Prof. William Chester Jordan (Princeton University) for this reference); Cuffel, "Between Reverence and Fear." On the consultation of the dead as problematic within a biblical context see 1 Sam. 28:7–25.

**124** Moses b. Maimon, *Mishnah Torah*, "hilkhot 'avodat kokhavim" chap. 11, law 13. Rashi, the French biblical commentator and tosaphist describes a similar practice in his commentary on BT Sanhedrin 65b, but is less neutral. He states that anyone who spends the night in a cemetery after fasting does so to invite an unclean spirit to rest on him, thus making the practice closer to a kind of necromancy. Horowitz, "Speaking to the Dead."

**125** *Zohar* I:225b. See the prayers of Sarah bat Mordecai of Satanov translated and discussed in Weissler, *Voices of the Matriarchs*, 126–46; Weissler, "Measuring Graves and Laying Wicks." For these prayers in the context of Ashkenazi Jewish women's veneration of the dead, see Cuffel, "Between Reverence and Fear."

**126** Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 26–37.

**127** Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 50–55. For examples see following chapters.

**128** See Chapter 5.

argued for the legality and benefits of the practice. Even he, however, objected to Muslims directing their requests for aid directly to the saint, or assuming that the saint him or herself performed miracles.<sup>129</sup>

Likewise, some Jews remained scrupulous about the distinction between directly asking the help of the dead, and the expectation that praying in their vicinity would increase the chances of the prayer being fulfilled, however. In the fourteenth century, R. Judah b. Asher, who was born in northern Europe but spent most of his life in Spain, wrote an ethical will containing important clues regarding European Jewish customs relating to holy dead. Before quoting his customary prayer at gravesites, R. Judah states, “And this I have prayed constantly [lit.: “all the days”] over the graves of the righteous and perfect.”<sup>130</sup> As Elliot Horowitz points out, R. Judah is careful not to address the dead directly in his prayer, but expresses his hope that the dead will also pray on his behalf.<sup>131</sup> R. Judah seems to have assumed that his own prayer to God would be enhanced because it was offered at the grave of a righteous person for he says: “May you (God) hear my prayer in this place.”<sup>132</sup> R. Judah’s choice of words “all the days” suggests that he performed this ritual often, either according to his own timing, or, perhaps, on days known to be propitious for requesting intercession from the dead.

Living in a Christian-dominated milieu, in which the veneration of saints (the holy dead) and the assertion that God himself had taken human form and died, added a level of anxiety and urgency to European Jewish efforts to justify their customs relating to the holy dead. They sought to distinguish between what they saw as the Christian practice of worshipping humans in the persons of Jesus and Christian saints, as opposed to requesting intercession from God at the graves of holy people. Medieval Jewish polemicists directly condemned the Christian practice of venerating the dead.<sup>133</sup> Despite such censures, Ephraim Shoham-Steiner has demonstrated that Jews were attracted to Christian healing shrines, a practice that prompted considerable apprehension and counter-rhetoric on the part of the Jewish leaders and polemicists.<sup>134</sup> When the author(s) of the *Zohar* mentioned the practice visiting graves, they carefully distinguished the motivations of the non-Jews—to perform sorcery—from those of Jews, which was to request intercession on the part of the dead before God.<sup>135</sup> The need on the part of the author(s) of the *Zohar* to denigrate non-Jewish visitation of gravesites, coupled with the strong counter-efforts on the part of Jewish polemicists, suggest that Jews recognized the par-

**129** al-Subkī, *Shifā’ al-saqām*, 127–31; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 201–8

**130** וזאת תפילתי כל הימים על קברי הצדיקים והתמומים; Abrahams, *Hebrew Ethical Wills*, 183. The prayer itself continues on 184. My translation is slightly different than that of Abrahams.

**131** Horowitz, “Speaking to the Dead”; Abrahams, *Hebrew Ethical Wills*, 184.

**132** ותשמע תפילתי במקום הזה; Abrahams, *Hebrew Ethical Wills*, 184.

**133** Joseph b. Nathan Official, *Sefer ha-Meqane*, no. 85 p. 82; [Nizzahon Yashan] *The Jewish Christian Debate*, no. 217, Hebrew 147–48, English 210–12 Horowitz, “Speaking to the Dead.”

**134** Shoham-Steiner, “Jews and Healing.”

**135** *Sefer ha-Zohar*, ed. Margolies; Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, *Zohar* III. 71b. Compare with *Zohar* I. 225b and III. 70b; Horowitz, “Speaking to the Dead”; Giller, “Recovering the Sanctity of the Galilee.” On the structure and authorship of the *Zohar* see: Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*.

allels between their own customs of requesting intercession from the dead and those of the Christians. They sought, sometimes in vain, to differentiate themselves from their Christian neighbours and to prevent their fellow Jews from being drawn into Christian saint veneration, and thereby, to Christianity itself. This evidence in conjunction with the admonitions of Jewish leaders to refrain from directly addressing the dead also indicates that some Jews did not differentiate clearly between asking the holy dead for intercession on behalf of the living and asking God in the vicinity of the saint.<sup>136</sup>

Thus, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim practices and attitudes toward the dead were becoming increasingly similar in the Middle Ages. This rapprochement was aided by long-standing commonalities, even as it prompted considerable anxiety among those seeking to delineate clear boundaries between religious communities. Jewish and Muslim beliefs and practices regarding the sacred dead converged even more in the Levant and possibly North Africa during the later Middle Ages and into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Brian Ogren has demonstrated that the idea of the soul's possible transmigration and the problems that such a phenomenon posed in the realms of religion, philosophy, and physics became the focus of various early modern Jewish and Christian thinkers. The earlier Muslim and Jewish debates, along with Greek philosophical discussions about the transmigration of the soul, or *gilgul*, as it was known in Jewish texts, were at the heart of early modern European Christian and Jewish debates on this topic.<sup>137</sup> This convergence between Muslim and Jewish beliefs and practices regarding transmigration, possession by the spirits of the dead, whether friendly or otherwise, and visiting gravesites to draw the souls of the holy dead to or into oneself, began earlier than the sixteenth century, however.

By the ninth century a new element appears in some Jews' understanding of death and the ability of the dead to interact with the living; the transmigration of souls. Anan b. David, sometimes accredited with founding the Karaite movement within Judaism, is described as having espoused this concept, and to have written an entire book, now lost, on the subject.<sup>138</sup> Rejected by Saadia Gaon (d. 942 CE), this belief that souls were reborn into the world nevertheless gained increasing currency in Jewish mystical writing from the twelfth-century onwards.<sup>139</sup> This concept was also well known to Muslims, both from their knowledge of Indian religions, and from Platonic, Neoplatonic, and Pythagorean philosophy from ancient Greece. Individuals such as the eleventh-century polymath, al-Bīrūnī and Muḥammad al-Shahrastānī (b. 1086 CE) both from Central Asia, who attempted to catalogue the various religious belief systems both within Islam and outside of it, describe the beliefs in *tanāsūkh* (transmigration of souls/metempsychosis).

**136** Haim Paltiel of Magdeburg—see in Meir b. Baruch of Rothenberg, *Responsa*, (Lvov, 1860), no. 164; Mintz, *She 'elot ve Teshuvot*, no. 79 (both accessed from "Bar Ilan Database" version 18); Horowitz, "Speaking to the Dead"; Shoham-Steiner, "For a Prayer in the Place Would Be Most Welcome"; Reiner, "Overt Falsehood and Covert Truth."

**137** Ogren, *Renaissance and Rebirth*; Ogren, "Circularity." Scholem, "Gilgul."

**138** Ogren, *Renaissance and Rebirth*, 12–13.

**139** Sa'adia ben Joseph, *The Books of Beliefs and Opinions*, Treatise VI, chap. VIII, pp. 259–63; Ogren, *Renaissance and Rebirth*, 11–21; Scholem, "Gilgul."

sis) from various regions and groups, and, additionally attribute the view to Manī and his followers.<sup>140</sup> Multiple theories regarding *tanāsūkh* were adopted and expanded by a number of Muslim thinkers, especially within Shi'a circles, although these theories were also hotly contested, and often treated as marginal by others.<sup>141</sup> Likewise, Saadia Gaon's brief description, suggests that there were multiple concepts of metempsychosis circulating at that time, both among non-Jews and Jews. However, his assertion that some Jews believed that souls could even migrate into the bodies of animals, and that this process was part of a system of reward and punishment, parallels views attributed to the Shi'a known as the Rāwandiyya, from Khorsan, in the anonymous chronicle, *Kitāb al-Uyūn*, which covers events approximately contemporaneous with Saadia Gaon.<sup>142</sup> Later Muslim as well as Jewish texts also attest to Jewish adherence to some form doctrine of reincarnation of souls, suggesting that there continued to be considerable interplay between Jewish and Muslim conceptualizations of the afterlife of the soul, and its enduring existence and interaction with the realm of the living.<sup>143</sup>

If souls could move from one body to the next in a series of lives, they were also able to come at the beckoning of the living, if the correct rituals were performed. Some authors, both Jewish and Muslim, associated this practice with polytheism and magic, although even in these cases, the calling of a spirit to bind with one's own, whether celestial/angelic, astral, or the souls of former prophets, were also associated with prophecy.<sup>144</sup> These and others drew their information and the theory of the process of drawing down spirits from *Ghāyat al-Hakīm* (*Goal of the Wise*), by the eleventh-century Andalusian mathematician and chemist, al-Majrīṭī, or rather, the later pseudonymous

**140** El, "Tanāsukh"; al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 206, 237; al-Bīrūnī, *Chronology*, transl. Sachau, 189, 225; Lawrence, *Shahrastānī on the Indian Religions*, 46–47, 126–42; al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal*, 8, 42–43, 113–15, 133–34, 185, 197–98, 249–50, 425, 433, 449–50; al-Shahrastānī, *Livre des religions*, 1:119, 223, 448–49, 453–54, 511–12, 641, 671–72, 2:169, 480, 499, 535–37; Jackson, "Doctrine of Metempsychosis in Manicheanism."

**141** El, "Tanāsukh"; Crone, *The Nativist Prophets*, 129, 192, 224–26, 233–22; Abdullah, "Ibn Sīnā and Abū Barakāt al-Baghdādī"; Alexandrin, "Rāzī and his Medieval Opponents"; Kamada, "Transmigration of Soul (*tanāsukh*)"; Kamada, "Metempsychosis (*tanāsukh*) in Mullā Ṣadrā's Thought"; Schmidtke, "Doctrine of the Transmigration of the Soul According to Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī"; Dietrich, "Die Lehre von der Reinkarnation im Islam"; Mirza, "The Syrian Isma'īlis"; Smith, "Transmigration and the Sufis"; Eklund, *Life between Death and Resurrection*, 100, 109–10.

**142** Sa'adia ben Joseph, *The Books of Beliefs and Opinions*, Treatise VI, chap. VIII, pp. 259–63; *Kitāb al-Uyūn* 227; Crone, *The Nativist Prophets*, 233.

**143** Crone, *The Nativist Prophets*, 242; Sack, "Some Remarks," This seemingly persistent exchange, or commonality between Jewish and Muslim ideas about the fate of the soul should be understood in light of Jewish interest in and borrowing from Shi'a ideas as well. On this see Krinis, *God's Chosen People*, although he does not address *tanāsukh* and *gilgul* directly. Nevertheless, many of the authors he identifies as potential sources for Jewish adaptations of Shi'a belief in al-Andalus, such as the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* or the writings of al-Shahrastānī, also describe systems of *tanāsukh*.

**144** Moses b. Maimon, *Guide*, 1:153–54 (I.63, fol. 81a–82a) 2:518–19 (III.29 fol. 64b–65b); Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, transl. Rosenthal 3:157–161; Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, ed. al-Darawīsh, 2:273–281 (chap. 27); Fenton, "The Ritual Visualization"; Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam*, 117, 151–153, 238–256, 287–289.

al-Majrīṭī, who described the calling down of *rūḥāniyya*, spirits, in some detail. He was rather less condemnatory of such techniques than some later Jewish and Muslim thinkers who followed him on the one hand, and his text, at least in part, seems to have been the foundation for the development of calling *rūḥāniyya* within mystical contexts.<sup>145</sup>

The ritual of prostrating oneself on the graves of the dead was common to certain Sufis and, eventually, Lurianic kabbalists in sixteenth and seventeenth century Palestine.<sup>146</sup> Indeed, as Paul Fenton has demonstrated, a number of Sufi thinkers combined beliefs about drawing down angelic or astral *rūḥāniyya*, with the expectation that the *rūḥāniyya* of prophets or saints could assist the living and developed rituals to be conducted at the gravesites of the holy dead in order to facilitate the bonding between the living mystic and the prophets and saints of former times, thus accelerating the living mystic's spiritual progress.<sup>147</sup> Given many Jews' fascination with Sufis in Egypt and surrounding regions from the Nagid Abraham b. Maimon (1186–1237) into the late fourteenth century at least, borrowing between Jewish and Muslim (at least some Jews' and Muslims') views of the holy dead is not surprising.<sup>148</sup> Similarly, scholars have long posited close connections between Jewish and Muslim mystical thought in medieval Iberia, identifying the Sufi, Ibn al-'Arabī, mentioned earlier, as one potentially significant source for Jewish knowledge of and borrowing from Sufi thought in the region, although clear evidence for a direct connection has often eluded them.<sup>149</sup> In his *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, Ibn al-'Arabī presents *rūḥāniyya* as being that of a deceased *walī*, i.e. friend of God/Sufi, who would come to assist the aspiring (living) mystic or disciple.<sup>150</sup> This idea is very similar to the one which eventually develops in Lurianic kabbalah; however, there is no clear indication that visiting the grave of the *walī* in question was necessary for the process. By contrast, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya describes the process in some detail even while adamantly opposing it:

As for the associationist pilgrimage (*al-ziyārah al-shirkīyah*), its origin comes from the worship of idols.

They said: the great dead, whose spirit (*rūḥ*) has nearness, dwelling (or: "status," "distinction") and merit before God the exalted, continues to receive kindnesses from God the exalted, and blessings flow upon his soul. If the visitor connected (*'allaqa*) his (own) spirit to it (the spirit of the great dead) and drew near to it, a share of the kindnesses flow ed from the spirit of the visited to the spirit of the pilgrim (visitor) as a mediation for it (the spirit of the visitor) like rays of light are reflected from a clear mirror and water onto a facing surface.

**145** (Pseudo-) al-Majrīṭī, *Picatrix*, 85, 90–91, 182; Fenton, "The Ritual Visualization"; *El*, "Rūḥāniyya."

**146** Fenton, "Influences soufies"; Fenton, "La 'hitbodetut'" Fenton, "Hashpa'ot Zūfiot."

**147** Fenton, "The Ritual Visualization."

**148** Russ-Fishbane, *Judaism, Sufism, and Pietests*; Goitein, "A Jewish Addict to Sufism."

**149** Krinis, *God's Chosen People*; Hames, "A Seal within a Seal"; McGaha, "The 'Sefer ha-Bahir' and Andalusian Sufism"; Kramer, "The Andalusian Mystic," Kiener, "Ibn 'Arabī and the Qabbalah."

**150** Ibn al-'Arabī, *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, 4:296–98, chap. 268; Fenton, "The Ritual Visualization."

They said: the perfection of the pilgrimage (*al-ziyārah*) is that the pilgrim applies (*yatawajjah*) with his spirit and heart to the dead and exerts his ardour upon him (the dead one) and turns all of his purpose and attention toward him (the dead one) so that he gives his concentration to nothing else. The greater the joining of his (the pilgrim's) ardour and heart was [focussed] on him (the deceased), the more likely he was to derive benefit from him.

Ibn Sīna, al-Farābī, and others besides these two mentioned this pilgrimage for this goal and the star-worshippers have spoken about it. If the rational soul connected (*ta'allaqat*) with the supernal spirits (*al-arwāḥ al-'ulwiyya*), light emanating from them flowed upon it (the rational soul).

On account of this mystery the stars were worshipped, sanctuaries (*hayākil*) were dedicated to them, prayers were addressed to them, and corporeal idols were dedicated to them.

This is exactly what was enjoined for those who venerate tombs, to dedicate festivals to them, draping them with covers, kindling lamps upon them and building mosques over them...

And this is what these associationists mean by pilgrimage to graves: it is the intercession through which they believe their god helps them, and intercedes for them to God the exalted. They say: for the worshipper, if his spirit was bound to the spirit of an individual favoured by God the exalted, and his ardour turned toward him and his heart devoted to him/it, the connection between them begins to increase [and] with it a part of what comes to him (the individual favoured by God) from God the exalted he (the worshipper) receives.<sup>151</sup>

On the one hand, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's critique parallels that of figures such as Maimonides and Ibn Khaldūn or even the authors of the *Zohar*, who associated the practices of calling down spirits or sleeping in graveyards in order to receive instructions from

#### 151 أما الزيارة الشركية: فاصلها مأخوذ عن عُيَاد الاصنام

قالوا: الميت المعظم، الذي لروحه قربٌ و منزلَةٌ و مزبئةٌ عند الله تعالى، لا يزال تأتيه الألطاف من الله تعالى، و تفيض على روحه الخيرات، فإذا علّق الزائر روحه به، و أدناها منه، فاض من روح المزور على روح الزائر من تلك الألطاف بواسطتها، كما ينعكس الشعاع من المرآة الصافية و الماء و نحوه على الجسم المقابل به

قالوا: فتمام الزيارة أن يتوجه الزائر بروحه و قلبه الى الميت، ويعكف بهتمه عليه، و يوجه قصده كله و اقباله عليه، بحيث لا يبقى فيه التفات الى غيره. وكلما كان جمع الهمة و القلب عليه أعظم، كان أقرب الى انتفاعه به

وقد ذكر هذه الزيارة على هذا الوجه ابن سينا و الفارابي و غيرهما، و صرح به عباد الكواكب في عبادتها، و قالوا: اذا تعلق النفس الناطقة بالارواح العلوية فاض عليها منها النور

وبهذا السر عبدت الكواكب، و اتخذت لها الهياكل، و صنفت لها الدعوات و اتخذت الاصنام المجسدة لها

و هذا بعينه هو الذي أوجب لعباد القبور اتخاذها أعيادا، و تعليق الستور عليها، و ايقاد السرج عليها، و مناء المساجد عليها...

و هذا الذي ذكره هؤلاء المشركون في زيارة القبور: هو الشفاعة التي ظنوا أن الهتهم تنفعهم بها، و تشفع لهم عند الله تعالى، قالوا: فان العبد اذا تعلق روحه بروح الوجه المقرب عند الله، و توجه بهتمه اليه، و عكف بقلبه عليه، صار بينه و بينه اتصال يفيض به عليه؛ و منه نصيب مما يحصل له من الله؛ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Ighāthat al-lahfān*, 221–222. Compare with Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Ighāthat al-lahfān* 527; Fenton "The Ritual Visualization"; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 189–90. My thanks to Ms. Rania Aḥmed for working through this passage with me. All errors are my own.

the dead, with paganism. Yet in this passage visiting graves is clearly connected to pilgrimage/*ziyāra* and part of a profound spiritual encounter designed to bind the spirits of the holy dead with the living who prayed at the gravesites and showed reverence to the occupant(s) of the tomb. The attribution of these practices to star-worshippers, polytheists, and certain Muslim philosophical thinkers, echoes earlier traditions, such as that of (Pseudo) al-Majrīṭī, however, it is also a polemical strategy to discredit fellow Muslims who indulged in such behaviours, much like the accusations of Sahl b. Maṣṣliḥ or the writers of the *Zohar*, discussed earlier.<sup>152</sup> However, the overall impression from both Muslim and Jewish sources portraying such rituals favourably, neutrally, or negatively, is that they were common Jews and Muslims in the Middle East, and, probably Iberia.

By the sixteenth century in Lurianic kabbalah, transmigration, or “reincarnation,” of souls became a central part not only of these kabbalists understanding of the world of the dead, but of their own journey to spiritual perfection. They sought the ability to induce “benevolent possession” (*yihud*) by the righteous dead, and to communicate with the dead by prostrating themselves on the graves of the righteous. With the need on the part of some souls to wander the earth and possess animals or people (*‘ibbur*), communication with the dead took on new meaning, both as a danger but also as a mode of communication with the spiritual world.<sup>153</sup> The “benevolent possession” resembles the rituals and expectations described and condemned by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya already in the fourteenth century.

Such similarities between motivations and practices, and the protective, guiding relationship assigned to the saintly deceased in relation to the living, and finally, the intersections between forms of possession, communication with the dead, and transmigration of souls attributed to Jewish and Muslim visitors to the graves of the holy dead during the Middle Ages and early modern period, would have provided ground for common understanding and rituals at least between Jews and Muslims throughout the Mediterranean as regards the holy dead. The attitudes of Jews coming from Western Europe were close enough to their Mizraḥī counterparts and European Jewish communities in the Middle East, Byzantium and Western Europe were in sufficient degrees of contact that much of what European Jews encountered in the Middle East would have accorded with their own world view. Christians of various denominations may not have accepted prostration on graves for the sake of possession/bonding with a saint, or in the case of Catholics from the Latin West, believed souls to be bound and punished or rewarded in the grave. Nevertheless, the expectation that saints would intervene for the sake of the living, and that one gained benefit by contact with their relics and grave sites would have provided enough common ground that certain behaviours toward the dead overlapped, and it would have provided a sense of familiarity among all participants.

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**152** Coulon, *La Magie en terre d’islam*, 85–89, 242–50.

**153** Chajes, *Between Two Worlds*; Chajes, “City of the Dead”; Chajes, “Jewish Exorcism” Faierstein, “*Maggidim*, Spirits, and Women”; Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 259–358; Fine, “Benevolent Spirit Possession”; Fine, “Pietistic Customs in Safed”; Fenton, “Influences soufies,” Fenton, “La ‘hitbodetut’” Giller, “Recovering the Sanctity of the Galilee”; Kallus, “Pneumatic Mystical Possession”; Lenowitz, “A Spirit Possession Tale,” Wolfson, “Weeping, Death, and Spiritual Ascent.”

## Conclusions

Taken together, the power of the dead to hear and intercede, the fragrance of the holy dead, and the presence of sacred trees and supernatural light all affirmed vitality of the special dead; they had powers that the living did not, they had overcome the bodily processes of death, fruit-bearing trees marked their graves as sites of fertility and growth, and finally, they were illumined by heavenly, supernatural light indicating their connection with the divine world. The holy dead were themselves liminal beings because they remained profoundly and continually connected with earthly life while simultaneously embodying proof of certain humans' ability to overcome the life of the body in favour of heavenly sanction. As a result, they served as an ideal bridge between living humans and the divine world.

The religious and historical development of each one of the topics touched upon in this chapter in any single religious tradition could occupy a chapter in its own right, or potentially fill a monograph. Indeed, in some instances, these topics, in specific geographical and chronological contexts, have become the focus of a book-length, scholarly study.<sup>154</sup> The point of this chapter, therefore, is not to provide a comprehensive history of these practices or attitudes within a given tradition or branch of a tradition, let alone within all Roman religions and, later, within medieval Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in all of their particular permutations. Rather, I seek to outline and underscore certain symbols, like light or smell, or beliefs, such as concerns about the needs and capabilities of the dead, that had enough commonalities within the various religious communities, to make the rituals and beliefs of other communities both attractive and comprehensible. Sometimes, the similarities were relatively superficial, as in the comparison between the Western Christian cult of the dead, and that in Judaism or Islam. At others, they seem virtually indistinguishable. For example, foul or pleasant scent, or a corpse's failure to rot seem to have been strongly analogous in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and to have remained so throughout the period examined in this study. Yet even in the case of superficial similarities, they were close enough to create common ground between communities that in turn facilitated shared practice. Light, smell, the meaning of trees, the needs of the dead, and the expectation on the part of the living that the dead could somehow hear and help the living were the connecting knots in a web of inter-related, but not identical meanings that encouraged rapprochement across the boundaries of religious communities, even, as we shall see, to the point of blurring or transforming allegiances. As such they were also instances of "difficult difference" and thus sometimes the focus of sharp criticism on the part of religious leaders who sought to delineate clearly between religious identities. In other instances, especially when these symbols were outside the context of interreligious encounter, they remained unproblematized. In either case, they are central to the understanding of religious symbolism and practice in the late antique and medieval Mediterranean broadly speaking, and especially when examining shared saint cults and festivals.

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**154** For example, Harvey, *Scenting Salvation*.

## Chapter 2

# THE OTHER AS WITNESS TO THE TRUTH POSITIVE RESPONSES TO SHARED RELIGIOUS VENERATION AMONG JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN PILGRIMS TO THE MIDDLE EAST FROM WESTERN EUROPE

### Introduction

In the region stretching from Iberia to Central Asia, Muslims, Jews, and Christians frequently participated in one another's religious festivals, made pilgrimage to sites holy to two or more religious groups, and venerated one another's "very special dead."<sup>1</sup> Superficially such inter-communal sharing indicates considerable harmony between members of different religious populations, however, these joint holy sites and festivals were often either strongly contested by religious leaders or interpreted in such a way as to demonstrate the superiority of a given writer's own faith. Toleration or celebrations of sharing, however polemical in tone, are frequently found in travel narratives, pilgrimage guides, chronicles, and hagiographies.

Beginning in the late eleventh century, the increase in pilgrimage from Europe to Jerusalem and surrounding regions, the tensions of conquest, crusade, or the fear of either, especially in Iberia, Sicily, and, eventually, the Levant and Egypt, all contributed to intensifying and variegating the nature of contact between Jews, Christians, and Muslims. At the same time these factors also made contact more problematic.<sup>2</sup> Periodic waves of immigration, prompted by outright expulsion, such as the 1492 expulsion of Jews from Spain, worsening political and social circumstances, such as the shift in policy toward *dhimmi* and dissenting Muslims under Almohad rule in parts of the Maghrib and al-Andalus from the twelfth to the early thirteenth centuries, or piety, such as the Franciscan movement to preach in Muslim lands, beginning with Francis of Assis' own mission there, brought new peoples, along with their customs, rituals, and attitudes, into

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**1** While I will touch upon Northern Europe, Persia, and parts of Central Asia, the focus of this study is on Mediterranean lands. One could expand the study to include South Asia, however, this is beyond the geographic and linguistic scope of the book.

**2** Fierro, "Christian Success"; Joranson, "Great German Pilgrimage." My thanks to Prof. Nicholas Paul of Fordham University for this reference. Obviously in some regions Christians and Jews, or Muslims, Christians, and Jews had been living side by side and interacting for many centuries, for example, Jews and Christians throughout Western Europe and Byzantium, Jews, Christians, and Muslims throughout the Muslim world. However, these sets of events brought new tensions and consequences even between old neighbours, for example the crusader attacks on Jews in the Rhineland, or Muslim suspicion of Coptic Christian administrators and fear of collusion with Crusaders. Chazan, *European Jewry*; Krebs, "Crusading Threats?". David Nirenberg notes that the policing of inter-religious sexual encounters in Iberia became harsher as anxiety about inter-communal relations increased: "Conversion, Sex, and Segregation."

permanent contact.<sup>3</sup> Population shifts during this period (ca. 1050–1650 CE) caused potential difficulties and sharing not only between religious minorities and the religious majority, but also between “native” and “new” co-religionists.<sup>4</sup> Shrines, tombs of the holy dead, and festivals served as loci of intra- and inter-group encounters. Western European writers, whether Christian or Jewish, who described the phenomena of voluntary shared practice interpreted events as reaffirming their own religion’s “truth” over and above that of “visitors.” In so doing, these authors recognized the potential of shared practices to challenge or even destroy religious boundaries and worked to reinterpret these behaviours to strengthen rather than weaken a sense of group belonging and distinction from the religious other. Nevertheless, in doing so, these authors also frequently granted the religious other a theological place as legitimate witnesses to the “truth” and thus members, albeit inferior ones, of a community of worshippers that had been widened to include multiple confessions. Yet, while any religious other could serve as an external witness to the truth of Judaism or Christianity, depending on the religious affiliation of a given author, Muslims were particularly favoured. As holders of political power, they brought prestige to a Jewish or Christian holy figure, but they lacked the same degree of negative associations which European Jews and Christians had for one another. Thus, as we shall see, failure to mention the presence of another group was also a polemical choice, which created hierarchical levels of belonging, partial belonging, and exclusion.

### Common Festivals and Scriptural and Extra-Scriptural “Saints”

Christians, Jews, and Muslims jointly recognized a number of prophetic figures and places associated with them as holy because of parallels between the Qur’an and Jewish and Christian scriptures. Such commonalities laid the groundwork for shared veneration of saints or celebration of festivals and fasts, however, they were not the sole cause. The observance of festivals or the veneration of the holy dead regularly extended beyond traditions that could be explained by the Tanakh, New Testament, or Qur’an, to extra-scriptural figures or festivals and even to ones that directly countered basic tenants of the scripture of particular participants. For example, Muslims celebrating Easter involved commemorating the death and resurrection of Jesus; events explicitly rejected in the Qur’an.<sup>5</sup> Yet the indications of holiness, the rituals at gravesites and shrines, and

**3** Tolán, *Saint Francis and the Sultan*; Moses, *Saint and the Sultan*; Mandalà, “La migrazione”; Jotischky, “Mendicants as Missionaries”; Cuffel, “Call and Response”; Roest, *Reading the Book of History*, 102–5, 264–66; Mancini, “La custodia di Terra Santa”; David, *To Come to the Land*; David, “The Spanish Exiles”; David, “Demographic Changes”; Goitein, “A Maghrebi Living in Cairo”; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 1:32, 56–57, 63, 2:136, 153–54, 167, 293, 300; Kedar, *Crusade and Mission*, 145.

**4** Russ-Fishbane, *Judaism, Sufism, and Pietests*, 178–79; Russ-Fishbane, “Between Politics and Piety,” 69–97; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 2:136, 153–55, 164–68; Cuffel, “Call and Response”; David, *To Come to the Land*, 7–8, 15–23, 26, 31–32, 62–88, 100–14, 116–17; MacEvitt, *The Crusades*; M. Frenkel, *The Compassionate and Benevolent*, 9; Weber, “Traveling Through Text”, 303–22.

**5** Qur’an 4:157.

the level of delight or frustration expressed by observers remained the same regardless of whether the holy person or day was one rooted in the Bible or the Qur'an or was derived from later practice or a scriptural tradition not accepted by all. Benjamin Kedar, in his study of the Marian shrine of Saydnaya, near Damascus, distinguishes between three types of "convergent" worship: 1) convergence without any genuinely shared rituals or interreligious services; 2) "inegalitarian" convergence, in which one group controls a site which two or more groups hold holy, and finally 3) "egalitarian" convergence in which two or more religious communities come together in shared rituals.<sup>6</sup> While Kedar's divisions are a fair characterization of religious events involving more than one community, very often those who observed these various "comings together" did not recognize the distinction between types one and three. Furthermore, authors imposed religious hierarchies in their description of events, even when there were minimal external ones. Similar behaviours and shared presence led writers to assume members of the religious other attended shrines or festivals with similar motivations to their own. These parallels in ritual and interpretation derive from a common symbolic language or culture of sanctity that extended throughout the Mediterranean and beyond, into parts of Northern Europe and farther East. Regional differences existed, but enough remained analogous that certain signs and customs would be meaningful as much to a Northern European Jew as to a Coptic Christian or a Maghribian Muslim.<sup>7</sup>

The Christian festivals that seemed to attract Muslim as well as Christian participants, focused on aspects of Jesus' life, such as Epiphany or Palm Sunday, or were linked with the holy family, especially Mary. Many of the rituals associated with these celebrations incorporated symbols which were common to all religious a holy person—a prophet for the Muslims, the messiah for the Christians.<sup>8</sup> Others, however, such as *Tishba' Av* (Ninth of Av), which marks the destruction of the Temple, have no theological or environmental common ground with Muslims or Christians, yet Jewish sources indicate that some Muslims respected or observed these holidays, either in conjunction with Jews or separately.<sup>9</sup>

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**6** Kedar, "Convergences...Saydnaya and the Knights Templar"; Kedar, "Convergences...Saydnaya." My thanks to Prof. Irven Resnick of University of Tennessee Chattanooga, for alerting me to these references. Compare Kedar's observations regarding Saydnaya and Catherine Mayeur Joyen's remarks about the seemingly "shared" mawlid of Copts and Muslims. She maintains that despite some shared locales and similar customs, the two are quite separate: *Pèlerinages d'Égypte*, 14–19, 28–33. Also see: Albera "Chemins."

**7** On the convergence of religious symbols and customs see Chapter 1.

**8** Kaiser, "La Madonne et le marabout"; Milwright, "The Balsam of Maṭariyya." On the modern phenomenon see, for example, Stadler, *Voices of the Ritual*; Sered, "Rachel's Tomb." Other scriptural figures include the matriarch Rachel and prophet Elijah, often associated with the qur'anic figure al-Khidr. See Meri, "Reappropriating Sacred Space"; Wolper, "Khidr and the Politics of Place"; Stadler, *Voices of the Ritual*; G. Bowman, "À l'ombre de Rachel!"; Strickert, *Rachel Weeping*; Sered, "Rachel's Tomb."

**9** Meshullam ben Menachem da Volterra, *Mas'a*, 72; Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 190.

### Unequal Witnesses and the Powerful Dead

Western European Jewish and Christian travel-writers revelled in the presence of the religious other, especially Muslims. By contrast these Jews and Christians only occasionally recognized one another, even at sites that were venerated by members of all three religions such as the graves of the patriarchs at Hebron.<sup>10</sup> Aryeh Graboïs hypothesizes that Christian pilgrims did not describe Jews in Palestine and Egypt because Jews were a known element in Europe and therefore uninteresting, an explanation that would apply equally well to European Jews' apparent disinterest in Christians.<sup>11</sup> Yet Martin Jacobs has shown more recently that while Muslims appear more frequently in Western Jewish travel narratives, Christians are in fact present, especially in those written during the crusading era. In most instances, Jewish discussions of Christians are in a polemical context (and visa versa).<sup>12</sup> I would further suggest, however, that European Jews and Christians saw in Muslims a potent rival to Christianity. Precisely because Muslims were martially powerful, their "endorsement" added to the esteem and validity of a given saint, ritual, or site and, by extension, to the religion to which the saint or holy space "belonged." Christians were not good candidates for such a role for European Jews, because of the frequent animosity between the two groups in Europe, whereas for Christians, veneration on the part of Jews could not greatly enhance the status of a saint

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**10** In the late fourteenth century, Frescobaldi and one of his travelling companions, Giorgio Gucci, do indicate that both Jews and Muslims revere Hebron, just as the Christians do. See Frescobaldi, *Viaggio di Lionardo*, 138; Frescobaldi, Gucci, and Sigoli, *Visit to the Holy Places*, 68; Gucci in Frescobaldi, Gucci, and Sigoli, *Visit to the Holy Places*, 123. They are something of an exception. The Christian pilgrims Niccolo of Poggibonsi, Felix Fabri, Anselme Adorno, Bertrandon de la Broquière, Burchard, and Affagart all visit the graves of the patriarchs in Hebron and mention the devotion of Muslims and other Christians for the place, but none comment on the presence of Jewish pilgrims there. See Niccolò da Poggibonsi, *Libro d'oltramare*, 1:246–48, Niccolò da Poggibonsi, *A Voyage beyond the Seas*, chap. cxv, 58–59; Felix Fabri, *Evagatorium*, pt. 2, vol. 2, fols. 8a–10a, pp. 384–54; Adorne, *Itinéraire*, 249–51; Bertrandon de la Broquière, *Le Voyage d'Outremer*, 16–18; Burchardus de Monte Sion, *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae*, 81; the edition of Bertrandon's narrative includes excerpts of a French translation of the German translation of the itinerary by the German pilgrim, Burchard or Brochard, commissioned at the same time as Bertrandon's. See also *Le Voyage d'Outremer*, 17n2, 18n1; Affagart, *Relation de Terre Sainte*, 138. For Jewish accounts of Hebron see Petachia of Regensburg, *Sivuv*, and Jacob ha-Kohen, in *Ozar masa'ot*, 55–56, 59, 61 respectively and in *Mas'ot Erez Yisra'el*, 53–54, 56–57, 60–61; Meshullam ben Menachem da Volterra, *Mas'a*, 68–69; Obadiah Bertinoro, *ha-Mas'a li-'Erez Isra'el*, 33–34, and *Mikhtav me'at nos'e almoni 1495* in Bertinoro, *ha-Mas'a li-'Erez Isra'el*, 70–71; Obadiah, *Mi Kitvei Mas'a 'Uvadia mi-Bertinora* in *Ozar masa'ot*, 116–17; *Mikhtav Mas'a li-hakham Venizi'ani almoni, 1495* in *Ozar masa'ot*, 130; Moses b. Mordecai Bassola, *Mas'a*, 147; Aescoly, *Sipur David ha-Reuveni*, 23–24; Petachia of Ratisbon; Jacob ha-Kohen, Meshullam ben Menahem de Volterra, Obadiah of Bertinoro, and *Sipur David ha-Reuveni*, transl. in Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 89, 92–93, 98, 185–89, 233, 260–62 respectively; Weber, *Traveling through Text*, 154–57.

**11** Graboïs, "Medieval Pilgrims," esp. 72. Nicole Chareyron also notes the tendency of western Christian and Jewish travellers to ignore one another and local Jews and Christians respectively, with occasional exceptions. Chareyron, *Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, 82, 90, 108, 120. However, see Weber, *Traveling through Text*, 120–43.

**12** Jacobs, *Reorienting the East*, 5, 65–66, 84–87, 89–93, 98–100, 109–10, 122–24, 158–62.

because Jews lacked political power and were already subservient to Christians according to canon law.<sup>13</sup> When Christian pilgrims did write about Jewish veneration they did so in such a way as to demonstrate that of all the peoples Jews were lowest in the religious hierarchy.<sup>14</sup> However, whether writing about Muslims or the rival religion with which they were most familiar, European Jews and Christians regularly portrayed the dead saint tricking or punishing the “unbeliever” until the person behaved in an acceptable fashion either toward the saint him or herself, or toward the “true believers,” the identity of those varying depending on the religion of the author. Such tales simultaneously served to assert the “correct” religious hierarchy of believer over outsider, yet also created a space and an essential role for the religious other within the community of the faithful. Pilgrimage and shared ritual therefore, both “stretched” and redefined communal boundaries, *and* they served as a vehicle for European Christians and Jews to *reassert* such boundaries through their interpretations of these shared festivals and saints.

Jewish and Christian pilgrims regularly noted the presence of members of other religions at “their” holy places and festivals or described the participation of multiple faiths in a particular festival without offering any value judgment about such mixing. In the account of Petachia of Regensburg’s travels in the late twelfth-century, “Ishmaelites” and Jews alike gather in front of the grave of the biblical prophet, Ezechiel during the Jewish festival of *Sukkot*, and both make pilgrimage to his grave and ask that he protect their goods.<sup>15</sup> The narrator neither praises nor condemns Muslim presence. The Dominican, Burchard of Mt. Sion (fl. ca. 1280), notes the devotion of “Saracens” at a monument which they claimed marked the grave of Joshua. What Burchard finds problematic or interesting is not the presence of Muslims, but rather whether the tomb has been correctly identified. Based on Judges 2:9, he refutes the claim, but does not thereby completely discredit the site. Instead, he suggests that it is tomb of Canaan son of Ham, son of Noah or “another of the sons.”<sup>16</sup>

This inclination on the part of Western pilgrims—Jewish or Christian—to note the presence of Muslims at holy gravesites or other shrines continued into the late Middle Ages and early modern period. In 1384, the Christian, Leonardo Frescobaldi, informed his readers that “the Saracens pay reverence to the Virgin Mary and to St. John the Baptist, and to St. Catherine and to all the patriarchs of the Old Testament,” and went on to explain Muslim attitudes toward Jesus. In his narrative he makes little comment except

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**13** Christian presence as well as Muslim could serve as validation for Judaism, however. Weber, “Sharing the Sites.”

**14** Chareyron, *Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, 119, 152, 182.

**15** Petachia of Regensburg, *Sivuv in 'Ozar Masa 'ot*, 50–51; Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 74–76. On Petachia of Regensburg see Jacobs, *Reorienting the East*, 35–37. On the Tomb of Ezechiel as a shared site between Jews and Muslims in Iraq: Jacobs, *Reorienting the East*, 119–20; Weber, *Traveling through Text*, 151–52.

**16** Burchardus de Monte Sion, *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae*, 28. This suggested identification could in itself be polemical, since the sons of Ham were believed to have been cursed to serve the descendants of the other sons of Noah. See Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, 150–75. Since Burchard allows for the possibility that the grave’s occupant could be a different son or grandson of Noah, the polemical thrust of the comment, if intended at all, is mild.

to observe that “in many things they (the Muslims) draw near to our faith.”<sup>17</sup> Another fourteenth-century Tuscan pilgrim, Niccolo of Poggibonsi, describes Muslims coming to venerate the tomb of the Virgin Mary and even the Holy Sepulchre without expressing approval or disapprobation.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the thirteenth-century Jewish pilgrim, R. Jacob, notes Muslims’ presence or veneration of the Jewish holy dead, remarking merely that “it is the custom of the Muslims to make their prayer houses upon the graves of the righteous.”<sup>19</sup> Another Jewish pilgrim, Meshullam of Volterra, writing in the late fifteenth century, says that Muslims had erected a monument over Rachel’s tomb and that both Jews and Muslims pray at her grave. He also offers no opinion as to the desirability of this joint veneration.<sup>20</sup> Meshullam’s contemporary, R. Isaac b. Alfara of Malaga noted the presence of Muslim guards for the graves of the biblical figures of Nun (the father of Joshua), Joshua, and Caleb and that they lit candles over the graves and opened them for the Jews.<sup>21</sup> Many of the Jewish handbooks to the graves of saints or “*zadiqim*” written between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries studied by Zvi Ilan likewise comment that Muslims “prostrate themselves” on the graves of prophets and rabbis or light lamps over them to honour them without expressing any value judgment about Muslims’ behaviour.<sup>22</sup> However, the mere fact that Muslim veneration of biblical prophets, rabbis, or extra-biblical Christian saints is described without objection implies tacit acceptance of their presence at these graves by the Jewish or Christian authors.

While some may have contented themselves with noting the presence of others at gravesites and festivals, others were far less neutral. For R. Samuel b. Samson, travelling in 1210 CE, Muslim attendance at Jewish saints’ graves brought honour to the particular holy person:

we found there the sepulchre of Jonathan, son of Uzziel, on which there is a great tree. The Ishmaelites bring oil to it and have a light burning there in his honour. They make their vows there too, to his glory.<sup>23</sup>

**17** Et sappiate che I Saracini portano reverenza alla Vergine Maria, e a San Giovanni Battista e a Santa Caterina, e a tutti I Patriarchi del Vecchio Testamento...e in mote cose lsi accostano alla nostra fede.” Frescobaldi, *Viaggio di Lionardo*, 101; Frescobaldi in Frescobaldi, Gucci, and Sigoli, *Visit to the Holy Places*, 50.

**18** Niccolò da Poggibonsi, *Libro d’oltramare*, 1:184–85, 1:58–59; Niccolo, *Voyage beyond the Seas*, 44, 14.

**19** והשימעאלים לעשות מקום תפלה שלהם על קברי הצדיקים R. Jacob Messenger of R. Yechiel of Paris (hereafter R. Jacob of Paris), ‘*Eleh ha-masa’ot she-’asah R. Jacob sliah me-yeshivat Rabbenu Yehiel me-Paris ve-hevi’a ’imo ’eleh simeni ha-qevrot* in Eisenstein, ed. *Ozar Masa’ot*, 69–70, compare with 66; Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 125. Also compare with 117. On approbation of Muslims’ presences at Jewish sites see Boušek, “and the Ishmaelites Honour the Site.”

**20** Meshullam ben Menahem da Volterra, *Mas’a*, 71; English translation in Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 188–89.

**21** *Masa’ot ’Erez Yisra’el*, 109.

**22** Ilan, *Graves of the Righteous*. See the document on 94–99, p. 5, lines 1–2, 9, p. 6 lines 10–12, p. 7 lines 7–9 of the document itself, the document on pp.133–36, lines.10, 36, 52

**23** והשימעאלים מביאין עליו שמן ומדליקין נר לכבודו, גם נדרים נדבות לכבודו R. Samuel b. R. Samson, *Mas’a de*

Concerning the grave of R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus, he also noted that “The Ishmaelites bring oil to burn there. It is a great and marvellous wonder.”<sup>24</sup> The attribution of “glory” to Jonathan because Muslims bring light and make their vows to him, or Samuel’s “wonder” because Muslims come with gifts of oil to R. Eliezer’s grave strongly indicate that for R. Samuel, the presence of Muslims enhanced the status of Jewish saints and Muslims’ attendance was clearly a positive event.

European Christian pilgrimage narratives show similar patterns to their Jewish counterparts. Christians marvelled at Muslim veneration of Mary, Jesus, and St. John the Baptist, a variety of extra-biblical saints, and at Muslim participation in Christian religious ceremonies. Burchard de Monte Sion notes in his pilgrimage narrative that “Saracens, however, much honour John (the Baptist) after Christ and the Blessed Virgin.”<sup>25</sup> Later, he makes the general observation: “Indeed, Sarracens honour all churches of the Blessed Virgin.”<sup>26</sup> Christian authors portray Mary as assisting Muslims who revere her, much to the delight of the Christians who reported these “events.” Simon Simeonis, from the fourteenth-century, reported:

at times Saracens devoutly holding vigil, all the time occupy themselves in the praises of the glorious Virgin, they wash and bathe themselves and their sick beside this fountain in a convenient place set aside for that purpose; where many protections are granted by the merits of the Virgin, even sometimes appearing personally to the Saracens, as the guards told us on oath, who with their own eyes saw her numberless times walking around the fountain to whom be glory and honor, world without end.<sup>27</sup>

Here the Muslims’ praise of and petition to the Virgin Mary and her willingness to help them very clearly augments the wonders of the Virgin in Simon’s eyes. That she appears

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*Philistina me-R. Samuel b. R. Samson*, in Eisenstein, ed., *Ozar Masa’ot*, 63; Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 107. Jonathan b. Uzziel was a rabbi from the early Tannaitic period 20–40 CE. On R. Samuel b. R. Samson see Jacobs, *Reorienting the East*, 26.

**24** ומביאים הישמעאלים שם שמן להדליקת ודבר גדול ומופלא הוא R. Samuel b. R. Samson, *Mas’a*, in Eisenstein, ed., *Ozar Masa’ot*, 64; Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 109.

**25** “Sarraceni autem beatum Iohannem multum honorant post Christum et beatam virginem”; Burchardus de Monte Sion, *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae*, 53.

**26** “Sarraceni quidem omnes ecclesias beate virginis honorant”; Burchardus de Monte Sion, *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae*, 79. Even Christian pilgrims who adopted an actively hostile tone when discussing Muslims, remark upon Muslim veneration of Mary. See, for example, Wilbrand van Oldenburg (d. 1233) *Peregrinatio* in Laurent, *Peregrinatores medii Aevi Quatuor*, 170. Remensnyder, *La Conquistadora*, 147–74, 184–92, 198–205; Cuffel, “Henceforward”; Weber, *Traveling through Text*, 153.

**27** “et quandoque Saraceni, vigiliis devote facientes laudibus gloriose Virginis continue insistunt, et se et eorum infirmos iuxta ipsum fontem lavant et balneant in loco convenienti et ad hoc deputato. Ubi multa presidia meritis ipsius Virginis ipsius infirmis, etiam ipsa quandoque personaliter Saracenis apparente, prestantur, sicut nobis juraverunt predicti custodes, qui eam circa ipsum fontem infinities deambulantes oculis propriis aspexerunt; cui est honor et gloria in secula seculorum, amen”; Symon Semeonis, *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*, 80/81–82/83. Compare with Adorne, *Itinéraire*, 192/3–194/5; Chareyron, *Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, 117, 179–81.

to Muslims regularly further increases the impression that Muslims have been added to Mary's "community," though, as with the Jewish texts there is no question of their conversion.

Similarly, when the Italian Franciscan, Suriano (1450–ca. 1529 CE) described the Palm Sunday procession into Jerusalem in which "the street is decked with flowers and carpets and other beautiful things so that not only the Christians are incited to devotion but also the Saracens, and we provoke them to praise our Lord Jesus Christ," he actively expressed his pleasure at Muslims' participation.<sup>28</sup> In Suriano's narrative Muslims clearly join in the core of the festival rather than simply watch it or keep the peace. Thus, in this Western Christian text the Christian "communitas" has been extended to include the Muslims.<sup>29</sup>

By saying "we provoke them to praise our Lord Jesus Christ," however, (*provocomoli a laudare el nostre Signore miser Yesu Christo*) Suriano suggests that Christians, or the beauty of the Christians' ritual, are responsible for Muslims' veneration of Jesus (rather than recognizing that reverence for Jesus is inherent in Islam, something Suriano would have known).<sup>30</sup> His portrayal subtly implies a hierarchy of Christian over Muslim in which the Christians have the power to direct Muslim worship to "our Lord" so that the presence and participation of the other is constructed to enhance and affirm the honour of the Christian God and of the Christians themselves.

Another friar, Felix Fabri (1441–1502 CE), created hierarchy in his description of shared practice but was less inclined to be so inclusive:

On the right side of the church is a large, deep cistern resembling a vast sepulchre filled with water and covered by latticework. It is said that Joseph drew water from it for his most saintly family to use: for the washing of the child Jesus, for cooking and for drinking, and by such use this water attained virtue so that to this day it is most healthful and cures many ailments. Therefore, as many Christians as Saracens often gather this water for the care of certain illnesses. What is more, the Saracens take their children to this place in order to be baptized in this water with the baptism of Christ; not that they believe in

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**28** "Adornata la via de flori e tapeti et altre assai nobilitade in modo che non solum incitano li christiani ma etiam li saraceni ad devotione, e provocomoli a laudare el nostre Signore miser Yesu Christo"; Suriano, *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, chap. li, Italian 105–6; Suriano, *Treatise on the Holy Land*, English 118.

**29** His description also includes Armenian Christians, for it is "tuti li armeni, religiosi e seculari" who engage in the procession, adorn the donkey and the path for the procession. Suriano, *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, chap. li, Italian, 105.

**30** Suriano was not simply a pilgrim. He was among the Franciscans who settled in Palestine. Roest, *Reading the Book of History*, 108–9, 119–23; Saletti, *I francescani in Terrasanta*; Mancini, "La custodia di Terra Santa." Dwelling in the Middle East would have afforded him the opportunity to familiarize himself with the basic beliefs of Muslims. He would have had this opportunity in Europe as well, since the Qur'an had been translated into Latin by the twelfth century as part of a new missionizing effort on the part of Christians, especially Dominicans and Franciscans: Martínez Gázquez, "Trois traductions"; Martínez Gázquez, "Traducciones Latinas"; Burman, "Tafsir and translation"; Burman, *Reading the Quran*.

the spiritual effect of baptism, rather they seek only corporeal salvation and health.<sup>31</sup>

Both Felix Fabri and Simon Simeonis indicate that Christians and Muslims sought out the well for prophylactic or curative purposes; but unlike Simon Simeonis, who saw the attendance and healing of Muslims and Christians together as glorifying Mary, Felix casts aspersions on the Muslims' motives. He seeks to create both division and clear hierarchy between the two groups by indicating that Muslims seek "baptism" only for corporeal health. Within this remark is an implied contrast to the Christians, whose motives for baptism are presumably spiritual, thus placing Christians on a higher and more "correct" plane in the divine realm than the Muslims. Felix's inference is troubled, however, by his admission that both groups come to the water source to gain healing. His effort to impose Christian over Muslim in the face of shared ritual without according Muslims a place within the "communitas" of Mary becomes contradictory, thinly masking the unified purpose of all participants.

So far, the examples of shared veneration or participation that I have provided have been voluntary ones. Frequently the religious other was *compelled* to observe certain rituals. In some instances the pressure was fairly benign, although always miraculous. According to Meshullam of Volterra the Muslims believed that the Holy of Holies (the most sacred part of the ancient Temple) was located beneath the Dome of the Rock. On *Tishba' Av* (the Jewish fast, mourning the destruction of the Temples), all the lamps of the Dome and its courtyard were extinguished and could not be rekindled until the fasting period was over. As a result, Meshullam explained, Muslims recognized *Tishba' Av*, and observed it in a fashion similar to that of the Jews.<sup>32</sup>

This tale of shared observance serves a number of purposes. The miracle of the lamps affirms the continued presence of God on the Temple Mount, *and* it demonstrates God's ability and inclination to compel the Muslims to behave in a reverent fashion and to observe the day of mourning for the Temple whose space the Muslims now occupied. Thus, while the Muslims controlled the Temple area, Meshullam's readers would see that the Muslims recognized the power of the God of Israel and abided by the same rituals as the Jews, an act that implied subservience as well as recognition of the rightness of Judaism. Furthermore, the fact that Muslims, like the Jews,

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**31** "In parte autem dextra ecclesiae est unum fossatum profundum et magnum, ac si esset grande sepulchrum aqua repletum et asseribus opertum de quo dicunt Joseph haussisse aquam in usum suae sacratissimae familiolae pro lotion pueri Jesu et pro coctione ciborum et pro potu, a quo usu tantaqum accepit haec aqua virtutem, ut hodiernum in diem saluberrima sit, multas aegritudines curans, unde tam Christiani quam Sarraceni creberrime de ea sumunt ad medendum certos languores. Insuper Sarraceni suos debiles pueros mittunt ad locum, ut in aqua illa baptizentur etiam baptismo Christi, non quod credant effectum aliquem spiritualem baptismi, sed solum corporalem salutem et munditiam quaerunt"; Felix Fabri, *Evagatorium*, 3:50–51 (fol. 92a); Felix Fabri, *Voyage en Egypte*, 2:464–65. The translator, Masson, identifies the place as the church of Abu Serga in Old Cairo. On this church see Van Loon, "Christian Heritage," esp. 96–113.

**32** Meshullam ben Menahem de Volterra, *Mas'a*, 72; Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 190. On Meshullam of Volterra's narrative and attitude toward Muslims, see Jacobs, *Reorienting the East*, 39–40, 95, 105, 116–17, 156–58.

mourned the destruction of the Temple suggested that Muslims recognized the tragedy of the Temple's destruction, and, similarly, would recognize the rightness of its restoration when the time came.<sup>33</sup>

Muslims who failed to respect the sacred space dedicated to Jewish prophets and sages found themselves thwarted. For example, every time the Muslims attempted to steal the stone over R. Eliezar b. 'Arach's grave, the dead rabbi simply whisked it back into place the following morning.<sup>34</sup> The Mishnaic R. Meir was less forbearing about such pilfering. In the narrative describing the travels of Petachia of Regensburg, a Muslim Sultan unwisely removed a stone step leading to grave of the rabbi.

In the night R. Meir came to him in a dream and seized him by his throat and wanted to strangle him. And R. Meir said to him, "Why did you steal my stone? For don't you know that I am a *zadiq* and beloved of God?" Then he (the sultan) sought his pardon. He said, "No I won't do it until you carry it (the stone) back yourself on your shoulder, before the eyes of all and you say 'I was wicked and I stole from my lord the *zadiq*.'" The next day he carried the stone on his shoulder before the eyes of all. He returned it to its place and he said "I was wicked and I stole from my lord the *zadiq*." The Muslims fear him (i.e. R. Meir) and they prostrate [themselves] there on his grave and they give him gifts and vow if they return in peace to give him such and such.<sup>35</sup>

Here the leader of the Muslims is publicly humiliated by the dead rabbi and forced to restore a building holy to the Jews—indeed, elsewhere in the narrative the author indicates that the Muslims transform it into a beautiful structure out of fear of R. Meir's wrath.<sup>36</sup> Such restoration would have been especially significant since one of the marks of the subjugation of the *dhimmi* was that they were prohibited from constructing new synagogues, churches, or other religious buildings or repairing those they had. In this tale the Sultan himself is compelled to rectify one of the symbols of Jewish subservi-

**33** For sources regarding belief that the Muslims had or would restore the Temple to the Jews see below, n61.

**34** Moses b. Mordechai Bassola, *Mas'a*, 141–42. Compare with the description of Ezechiel defending his grave, in the narrative of Petachia of Ratisbon's travels, though in this case the prophet is working against dishonest Jews, showing that these stories do not merely relate to Muslims. Petahiah of Ratisbon *Sivuv*, 13–15; Petahiah in Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 74–75; On Moshe Basula see Jacobs, *Reorienting the East*, 42–43.

**35** ובלילה בא לו ר מאיר בחלום ותפס אותו בגרונו ורצה לחנקו יאמר לו למה גזלת אבן שלי? וכי אינך יודע שצדיק ואהוב למקום אני? אז בקש ממנו מחילה, אמר לא אעשה עד שתשאנה אתה בעצמך על כתפך לעין כל ותאמר רשעתי שגולתי אדוני הצדיק. למחר נשא האבן על כתיפו לעין כל יהחזיר את האבן למקומה ואמר רשעתי שגולתי אדוני הצדיק. ייראים ממנו הישמעאלים ומשתחיים נשם על קברו ונותנין לו מתנות ונידריים אם יחזרו בשלום נתונין כך וכך.; Petahiah of Regensburg, *Sivuv*, 18; Also in Petahiah, *Sivuv*, in Eisenstein, ed., *Ozar Masa'ot*, 52 with some small differences in the Hebrew text. Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 77–78. My translation is slightly different than Adler's. Also see Jacob's discussion of this incident: *Reorienting the East*, 152 and Prawer, *The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 210.

**36** Petahiah of Regensburg, *Sivuv*, 17–18; Petahiah, *Sivuv*, in Eisenstein, ed., *Ozar Masa'ot*, 52; Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 77.

ence dictated by Muslim law.<sup>37</sup> Muslims' veneration of the holy man enhances the individual status of this saint or *zādiq* even as it did for Jonathan b. Uzziel and Eliezer b. Hyrcanus in R. Simon's narrative. However, the author of this story and other ones like it took a step further and portrayed the Jewish holy dead as more powerful than the Muslims, thus glorifying not only the saint, but Judaism as a whole.<sup>38</sup> The saint's ability to press the Sultan and other Muslims into honouring him is a direct reversal of living Jews' social and political relations with non-Jews. The holy Jewish dead are able to do what the living could not: force the non-Jews in power over them to offer respect and even obedience. These rhetorical acts of resistance assured audiences that the "correct" spiritual hierarchy, namely Jewish over Muslim, was indeed in place and reemphasized the validity of Judaism. What is striking about these tales is that the Jewish holy dead *desire* and *expect* Muslim veneration.

Stories in which an individual Muslim is punished for lack of respect invariably lead to many Muslims venerating and giving gifts to the Jewish holy dead, as we see in this story. In two fifteenth-century travel accounts a Muslim woman who attempts to climb a tree sacred to R. Judah b. 'Il'a'i and steal his almonds is cast from the tree and her bones are broken until she either lights candles on his grave or dedicates all her gold bracelets to him, whereupon he heals her.<sup>39</sup> As in Petachia's story, many "Ishmaelites" honour the gravesite as a result of the saint's stern treatment of the woman. In these tales, the holy dead, in drawing many Muslims as well as Jews to venerate them, not only demonstrate their own authority and the ultimate righteousness and supremacy of Judaism, they also grant Muslims a place within the Jewish community. A subservient place, but a place nonetheless, that in turn challenged the boundary between Jew and Muslim.

In Christian pilgrimage accounts and collections of miracle tales from Iberia, France and other parts of Northern Europe, the Virgin Mary regularly punishes Muslims who do not honour her appropriately and thereby compels them to venerate her. Those who remain obstinate die.<sup>40</sup> Suriano and Fabri both include a lengthy account of Mary's dealings with the Muslim custodians of her sepulchre. In Suriano's narrative, the Virgin

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**37** Cohen, *Under Crescent & Cross*, 58–60; David, *To Come to the Land*, 50–51. Of course, Christians under Islam faced the same restrictions, since such regulations were derived from the Pact of Umar, applicable to all *dhimmi*.

**38** Petachia has a number of stories similar to this one, in which the sanctity of the Jews is proven over that of the Muslims through a saint's favour, or simply by the saint's punishment of the Muslims. Petachiah of Regensburg, *Sivuv*, in Eisenstein, ed., *Ozar Masa'ot*, 50, 51, 53; Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 72, 74–75, 79, 81, 84; Prawer, *The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 206–15.

**39** Moses b. Mordecai Bassola, *Masa'ot 'Erez Yisra'el*, 139–140, and also in Eisenstein, ed., *Ozar Masa'ot*, 139–40, and Anonymous Venetian of 1495, in Eisenstein, ed., *Ozar Masa'ot*, 127; Boušek, "...and the Ishmaelites Honour the Site." For a discussion of the gendered context of this passage see Chapter 6 of this book and Cuffel "From Practice to Polemic."

**40** Alfonso X, *Cantigas*, nos. 28, 46, 99, 167; "El libro de los Exemplos," no. 206; John, of Garland, *Stella Maris*, no. 7, p. 106; Gautier de Coinci, *Les miracles de Notre Dame*, 3:23–26; Remensnyder, *La Conquistadora*, 188–92, 195, 196–97, 199–201; Cuffel, "Henceforward"; Trivison, "Prayer and Prejudice in the CSM."

appears to the custodian and announces that she is his enemy because he has denied Christians access to the tomb. He is to die as will his sons unless they change this policy. As a result, the sons invite the friars of Mt. Zion to celebrate in the church over Mary's grave. "And in sign of perpetual subjugation they bring every year to the friars...the first fruits of their garden."<sup>41</sup> Fabri tells a similar tale, although in his version the custodian is upbraided by the Virgin because he charges three ducats to enter the Church, causing some poor pilgrims to forgo visiting the place. According to Fabri, the old caretaker is allowed to live, and his son (or grandson) stands at the door, saying: "Come adore God and praise Mary."<sup>42</sup> Alternately, Suriano recounts that the custodian (the son of the man, who, in his version, was killed by Mary) regularly saw the Virgin and a group of maidens dancing in the church before dawn, and in a fit of devotion would cry out: "Praise be to God and Holy Mary!"<sup>43</sup>

Both versions include Muslims among Mary's devotees on the one hand—they care for her tomb, praise her, and encourage others to do likewise—and, on the other, place Muslims unequivocally below Christians in Mary's regard. The Muslims are punished for hindering Christian access to Mary's shrine and compelled not only to revere Mary herself, but to encourage Christian (and Muslim) entry. Furthermore, in Suriano's narrative, the Muslim custodians are required to humble themselves to Christian religious leaders by bringing them a kind of tribute, namely the first fruits of the church's garden. Bringing any annual gift from the sacred garden already would have implied Muslim deference toward the friars, however, its profound extent is emphasized by the Muslims' being forced to bring the *first* produce of the garden, before any Muslim has tasted or benefited from it. Thus, Suriano along with Fabri, creates a clear spiritual hierarchy *within Muslim lands* of Christian over Muslim. As with the European Jewish stories of Muslims being forced to respect and even venerate dead rabbis, the holy Christian dead were able to accomplish what the Christians had been unable to do via crusade or missionizing, namely subjugate Muslims in the Holy Land, in spirit, if not in political fact.<sup>44</sup>

In Christian travel accounts, not all saints were so vehement in their own defence as the Virgin Mary, however. Bertrandon de la Broquière, who travelled throughout

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41 "Et in signo de perptetua subiectione, de l fructi che nascono nel giardino che è sopra della Giesia de la Madona, avanti che loro ne mangiano, portando li primitii a le Fratri, cum altri presenti, ogni anno." Suriano, *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, chap. xlvi, Italian, 100, English, 113. Cuffel, "Henceforward."

42 "Vade, et Deum adora, et virginem Mariam lauda." Felix Fabri, *Evagatorium*, 1:372–74, fol. 143a–b. Quoted passage on p. 373. Cuffel, "Henceforward."

43 "Laudato Dio e sancta Maria!" Suriano, *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, chap. xlvi. Italian, 100–101. English, 113–14.

44 Compare the differing tones and implications of Suriano and Felix Fabri's treatment of Muslim veneration of Mary at her gravesite with various western Christian pilgrims' portrayal of Muslims at the Marian shrine at Saydnaya. Niccolò da Poggibonsi, *Libro d'oltramare*, 2:19; Niccolo, *Voyage beyond the Seas*, 78; Frescobaldi, *Viaggio di Lionardo*, 167–70, Frescobaldi in Frescobaldi, Gucci, and Sigoli, *Visit to the Holy Places*, 84–85; Gucci, in Frescobaldi, Gucci, and Sigoli, *Visit to the Holy Places*, 141–42; Burchard of Strasbourg, *Itinerarium*, 526–27; Thomsen, *Burchards Bericht*, 11, 241–58; Tolan, *Sons of Ishmael*, 105–10.

the Middle East and Constantinople in 1432–1433 at the behest of Philip the Good (1396–1467), Duke of Burgundy, notes two such incidents. In the first, he describes seeing the place where St. George mounted his horse on his way to battle the dragon. According to Bertrandon, Muslims had frequently tried to remove the St. George's stepping stone but had been unable to do so.<sup>45</sup> Slightly later in the narrative, he states that he saw a mosque in Beirut which had once been a church to St. Barbara before the "Sarazins" had converted it. "And when they (the Muslims) wanted to mount on top of it to call (for prayer) as they were accustomed, they were so beaten up that there were none who dared go up there."<sup>46</sup>

These incidents described briefly by Bertrandon are similar to the ones in the medieval Jewish accounts in which rabbis defend their graves or shrines from the depredations of disrespectful Muslims. Indeed, they serve the same function, namely to demonstrate the saints'—in this case Christian saints'—ability to protect their holy space against members of the ruling religious power, when the saints' followers were politically unable to do so. As with both the Jewish and other Christian tales, these saints' capacity to confound the Muslims upholds not only the individual holy person's honour, but, by extension, that of the religion of their followers. Yet the episodes in Bertrandon's book echo but palely the dramatic confrontations contained in the other narratives discussed so far. The relative lack of detail or tone of exaltation may be due to the differing purpose for Bertrandon's voyage. While he dutifully went to the customary pilgrimage sites, Bertrandon indicates from the beginning that the reason for his journey and for the narrative itself was to provide information for aspiring crusaders and other travellers.<sup>47</sup> The quasi-diplomatic (as opposed to religious) basis for his journey and the need to incite Christian nobility to crusade may have motivated him emphasize Muslim oppression of Christians and humiliation of Muslims without including concomitant signs of shared veneration between the two. In Fabri and Suriano's accounts, the Muslims, while subordinated and humiliated by Mary, are nevertheless part of her community of devotees because they venerate her. Bertrandon, by contrast, does not indicate that the Muslims seek to co-opt the stone or church of St. George or St. Barbara respectively because they venerate these saints—which is likely, given other indications of Muslim veneration of these two Christian saints—nor does he indicate that Muslims venerate these sites after the saints repulse the Muslims' designs.<sup>48</sup> His narrative choices effectively exclude Muslims from the community of the saint and emphasize the oppositional relationship

<sup>45</sup> Bertrandon de la Broquière, *Le Voyage d'Outremer*, 34.

<sup>46</sup> Et quant ilz ont volu monter dessus pour crier ainsy qu'ilz ont acoutumé, ilz se sont trouvez tant batus qu'il n'est ores nul qui y ose aler. Bertrandon de la Broquière, *Le Voyage d'Outremer*, 40. Compare with Thévenot, *Voyages*, vol. 3, bk. 1 chap. IV, p. 61, where the hapless Muslims simply lose their voice rather than get beaten; Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam*, 1:24–25.

<sup>47</sup> Bertrandon de la Broquière, *Le Voyage d'Outremer*, 2.

<sup>48</sup> al-Muqaddasī, *Ahsan*, ed. de Goeje, p. 182, transl. Miquel, para. 212, pp. 223–24; Dajani-Shakeel, "Natives and Franks in Palestine"; Wolper, *Cities and Saints*, 74, 97; Wolper, "Khidr and the Politics of Place"; See, too, Sturm, "The Arab Geographer."

of Muslims to Christianity's protectors by presenting the Muslims as hostilely attempting to take over the saints' space whereas the saints definitively thwart Muslims' plans.

Neither Bertrandon's sparse descriptions of potential shared veneration nor their implications should be taken as necessarily typical of the attitudes of European Christians whose travels were motivated by political in addition to religious reasons, however. For example, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the orientalist and ambassador, François Savary de Breves, voyaged throughout the Ottoman empire and North Africa in order to conduct negotiations on behalf of King Henry IV (1553–1610) of France. The description of his diplomatic endeavours also include his visitation of holy sites and rituals there. His early modern account follows patterns strongly akin to late medieval pilgrimage narratives in descriptions of shared veneration. According to Savary in one town dedicated to St. James, the population, which consists of Greek and Maronite Christians and some Muslims ("Mores"), there is a church dedicated to St. James "which the Muslims have in veneration for the miracles which happens there, as much in their favour as for the Christians."<sup>49</sup> He then repeats a story told to him by the Bey (governor, chief) about the misfortunes of a recalcitrant Muslim who:

passing near the said church (i.e. the one dedicated to St. James) where the divine service was being held, urinated against [the church] in derision of the Christians and their ceremonies. Suddenly his genitals swelled up and were seized by a pain and inflammation so great that he was dying, and no one could alleviate [his pain] by any remedy, until one of his companions, who had seen him do [this act] of insolence, judged that his malady was a punishment by God. He (his companion) told him that he should dedicate himself to the church. This having been done and the voyage made, he received healing.<sup>50</sup>

The majority of the local Muslims are already part of the saint's "community" along with the Christians. In Savary's narrative, the degree of approbation by Muslims, and, therefore, the Christian saint's honour, is further elevated because the local Muslim governor himself recounts the story of his coreligionist's chastisement at the hands of the Christian saint. That he does so to a group of foreign Christians implies a link between Christian and Muslim admirers of St. James that trumps confessional and geographic boundaries, and places Muslim scoffers not only on the outside of the Christian

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**49** "Un autre grand bourg, dit sanct Iacques, peupleés des Chrestiens Grecs et Marionites et quelques Mores lequels y on tune Eglise dediée au saint dont la ville porte le nom, laquelle les Mahumetans ont en veneration, pour les miracles qui s'y font, tan en faveur d' eux, que des Chrestiens"; Savary de Breves, *Relation des Voyages*, 43–44.

**50** "passant pres de ladite Eglise, où se faisoit le service divin, ayant en derision des Chretiens et de leurs ceremonies, pissé contre, soudain se parties genitals luy enflerent et furent saisies d'une douleur et inflammation si grande, qu'il mouroit, et ne pouvoit-on par aucun remede, le soulager, iusques à ce qu'un sein companion, qui luy avoit veu faire cest insolence, iugeant que sa maladie estoit punition de Dieu, l'advertit au'il eust à se vouer à ladite Eglise; ce qu'ayant faict, et accomply le voyage, il receut guerison" Savary de Breves, *Relation des Voyages*, 44. I have taken some liberties with the word order, verb construction, and sentence division, to make the passage read more easily in modern English.

saint's community, but among those who have sinned and are rightfully punished by God according to other Muslims. As in the narratives of Petachia of Regensburg, Felix Fabri, and Suriano, restitution through punishment is not enough, however; the erring Muslim is compelled to join the saint's fold, in this case, going so far as to journey back to the Christian shrine and dedicate himself to it. Again, the holy dead can do what living members of religious minorities cannot—force members of the Muslim majority into respectful behaviour, reverence, and even quasi-membership in Jewish or Christian society, at least on a local level. In this particular instance, the Muslim's submission is especially powerful because of the intimate, gendered manner of its accomplishment.

Humiliation, injury, or illness have been regular components of saintly chastisement in the medieval Jewish and Christian stories of disrespectful Muslims examined so far, however, in this incident the malady imposed by the saint is humiliating in a way that is profoundly personal and emasculating. Masculine sexuality was strongly associated with martial activity in both Muslim and Western Christian literature, including the conquest or defilement of buildings or towns.<sup>51</sup> Urinating on the church echoed the phallic imagery linked with conquest and crusade at the same time that the act defiled the church and denied its sanctity by dousing it in an impure substance according to Islamic law.<sup>52</sup> Savary well understood the profundity of insult intended by the Muslim's deed due to urine's polluting qualities, for later in the narrative Savary outlines the degree to which Muslims considered urine defiling and the lengths to which they would go to clean themselves.<sup>53</sup> Afflicting the offending Muslim's genitals, therefore, struck at the source of both pollution and symbolic domination, so that the Muslim's literal submission to the Christian saint in vowing himself to the church is inscribed upon his body in a corporeal act of conquest by St. James.

While European Jews and Christians did not often include descriptions of one another participating in festivals or making pilgrimages, they did not entirely ignore one another either. European Jews noted the existence of Eastern Christians and their relationship both with one another and with Jews. For example, Obadiah of Bertinoro listed the different kinds of Christians in Jerusalem, and compared their rivalry with that between the Rabbanite Jews, the Karaites and Samaritans.<sup>54</sup> Meshullam of Volterra remarked upon the hostility of Greek Christians toward Jews in Candia.<sup>55</sup> Benjamin of

**51** Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 146–47; Cuffel, “Reorienting Christian ‘Amazons’”; Desmond, *Ovid's Art*, 37–46; Clark, “Jousting without a Lance”; Amer, “Lesbian Sex and the Military”; Vasvári, “The Semiotics of Phallic Aggression”; Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens*, 2–5.

**52** Katz, *Body of the Text*, 1–2, 7, 13, 91, 140, 170, 174–75, 193.

**53** Savary de Breves, *Relation des Voyages*, 57. Compare with Katz, *Body of the Text*, 90–91, 135–36, 140, 170, 181–84.

**54** Obadiah da Bertinoro, in Eisenstein, ed., *Ozar Masa'ot*, 120–21. Obadiah, in Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 242–43. Karaites were Jews who did not accept the authority of the Talmud. On Obadiah and Western Jews' attitudes toward Karaites, Samaritans, and local rabbanite Jews and various sorts of eastern Christians, see Jacobs, *Reorienting the East*, 41–42, 159–62, 180–86. More generally see Rustow, *Heresy and the Politics of Community*; Kedar, “The Frankish Period”; R. T. Anderson, “Samaritan History during the Renaissance.”

**55** Meshullam ben Menahem de Volterra, *Mas'a*, 82; Meshullam, in Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 201–2.

Tudela, writing much earlier in the twelfth century, described the basic politics of Constantinople and Byzantine Christian hostility toward the Jews, and, according to Martin Jacobs, described an instance of local Jewish-Christian competition over Daniel's tomb, located in Susa (Shūsh in modern Iran).<sup>56</sup> Christians also noted the divisions between Jewish communities. Nathan Schur, for example, has catalogued discussions of Samaritans in Western Christian travel narratives.<sup>57</sup> Often the mentions are fleeting, or the author does not connect them with Jewish communities, although that does not mean that Samaritans are viewed favourably.<sup>58</sup> Other travellers, such as Wilhelm von Boldensele (ca. 1285–1338) described various types of local Christian, Jewish, and related communities at some length.<sup>59</sup>

Discussions of Byzantine and other Christian groups from the Eastern Mediterranean frequently indicate enmity between them and Jews, however, these observations are fairly brief. More detailed and more venomous in tone are Jewish accounts of Western Christians, in particular, crusaders.<sup>60</sup> The narrator of Petachia of Regensburg's journey contrasts Muslims and crusaders by claiming that the king of the Ishmaelites, "a friend of the Jews," had constructed a beautiful place of prayer where the Temple and court had once stood, and commanded that only Jews worship there. These actions are contrasted with the "Gentiles" (*goyim* גוים) meaning in this case the crusaders, who attempt to place images in the building.<sup>61</sup> In this story Muslims at the very least respect Jewish holy space even if they do not actively venerate it themselves, whereas the Christians attempt to reshape the space according to their own beliefs. In a briefer descrip-

**56** Benjamin of Tudela, *Masa'ot R. Benjamin*, in Eisenstein, ed., *Ozar Masa'ot*, 22–23; Benjamin, *Sefer Masa'ot shel R. Benjamin mi Tudelah*, ed. Adler, 6–8; Benjamin, in Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 39–42; Jacobs, *Reorienting the East*, 121–24. On late Byzantine attitudes toward the Jews see Bowman, *The Jews of Byzantium*, 30–40.

**57** Schur, "The Samaritans as Described in Christian Itineraries."

**58** See for example Ogier Seigneur d'Anglure, *Saint Voyage de Jherusalem*, 43, who speaks of a street where "a sort of miscreants, called Samaritans live" ("en une autre rue habitten une maniere de mescreans que l'en appellee Samaritains"); Schur, "The Samaritans as Described in Christian Itineraries"; Weber, *Traveling through Text*, 134–36.

**59** Wilhelm von Boldensele, *Liber*, chap. 6, nos. 254–256; chap. 8, nos. 264–266, 271; chap. 9, nos. 274, 276, 278; Weber, *Traveling through Text*, 126–33.

**60** Jacobs, *Reorienting the East*, 83–93, 98–100, 109–10, 158–62 but also 58, 74 which are rather more positive or at least neutral.

**61** Petachiah of Regensburg, *Sivuv*, in Eisenstein, ed., *Ozar Masa'ot*, 55–56; Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 88–89. Boušek, "...and the Ishmaelites Honour the Site." Weber, *Traveling through Text*, 32–39, 157–58; Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 66, 160–62, 296–302. The idea that the Muslims either rebuilt the Temple in some way or allowed the Jews to do so is a longstanding tradition within medieval Judaism. *Sefer Zerubbabel*, *Nistarot R. Simon b. Yohai*, and *Pirkei Meshiah* respectively in Kaufman, ed., *Midreshe ge'ulah*, 84, 189, 192, 195, 320, 333–34, 336, and in *Beit Midrash*, 3:56, 80, 69, 71. Dagron and Déroche, "Juifs et Chrétiens"; Avi-Yonah, *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine Rule*, 265–70; Fleischer, "Matters of Interest Regarding Qallir" and "Solving the Question of his Time and the Place of the piyyuṭ of R. 'Eli'azar b. Qallir"; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 529–60. Also compare with Sebēos, *The Armenian History*, chap. 43, p. 102, who states that the Jews attempted to reestablish the holy of holies under Muslim rule, only to have the Muslims take over the site of the Temple.

tion but seemingly of the same place and phenomenon, Samuel b. Samson says that the Muslims do indeed venerate this place.<sup>62</sup> In both narratives, the images fall down each time the Christians attempt to set them up, indicating God's defence of holy space and utter rejection of Christian claims. Muslims, however, occupy a liminal place between the rejected Christians and the holy Jews, being neither part of the Jewish community, nor yet repudiated out of hand as their enemy or unaware or disrespectful of Jewish knowledge and sanctified space. This story more explicitly indicates the hierarchy that most western Jewish pilgrimage accounts imply by lauding the presence of Muslims at holy sites or festivals and ignoring the Christians.<sup>63</sup>

Jacob ha-Cohen travelled in Palestine and the surrounding area during the Crusader occupation. He, like other Jewish pilgrims of the period, noted the veneration of Jewish saints on the part of "people from all nations" who "kindle lights" and come to have their barrenness or sickness cured.<sup>64</sup> He also included a number of tales about western Christians who showed disrespect toward a Jewish holy site; they were not merely punished for their misbehaviour, they were killed.<sup>65</sup> Jewish vengeance even extended to the grave:

[I]n Caesarea is the grave of the ten martyrs of the Romans, and on the place where they were killed there is a great marble stone in ruins. A Gentile was buried in front of the door of the cave and in a dream he came to the rulers of the province and cried to them, "Take me away, for I have no rest, for they smite with iron rods heated in the fire," and he said to them that in this cave there are twelve dead men clothed in prayer cloaks [*tallit*] and they do not look like men, but angels.<sup>66</sup>

The ten martyrs refer to a group of rabbis, who, according to midrashic and poetic tradition were executed by the Roman emperor. Commemoration of these mishnaic rab-

**62** R. Samuel b. Samson, *Mas'a*, in Eisenstein, ed., *Ozar Masa'ot*, 63; Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 104. Compare with R. Jacob of Paris, *'Eleh ha-Masa'ot*, in Eisenstein, ed., *Ozar Masa'ot*, 67; Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 118–19.

**63** Muslims as "between" Christians and Jews, being both impure and a potential enemy, but also a potential ally to Jews and less impure or undesirable than Christians is a theme in medieval European Jewish biblical exegesis, apocalyptic speculation, and mystical writing, not just pilgrimage narratives. Kiener, "The Image of Islam in the Zohar"; Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 22–23n31, 27, 90–91n296, 130–35, 155–63; Cuffel, "The Matter of Others"; Cuffel, "Call and Response."

**64** Jacob ha-Kohen, *Sipur Masa'ot*, in Eisenstein, ed., *Ozar Masa'ot*, 60; Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 95. On the dating of Jacob ha-Cohen's narrative and historical context see Adler's discussion at the beginning of the text, 92 and Prawer, *The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 184–91.

**65** Jacob ha-Kohen, *Sipur Masa'ot*, in Eisenstein, ed., *Ozar Masa'ot*, 60–61; Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 96–97. Muslims who violate the sanctity of Jewish sites also die in some Jewish narratives, however that fate is rarer than being punished and threatened with death until the Muslim rectifies his or her indiscretion. For an example of Muslims' dying see Petaḥiah of Regensburg, *Sivuv*, 11, and Petaḥiah, in Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 72.

**66** ובקסרין יש מערה של עשרה הרוגי מלכות, ובמקום קבר גוי אחד, ובא בחלום לראשי המדינה חזק לפניהם: הוציאו אותי שאין לי תקנה כי מכין אותי בשבטים של ברזל רתוחין באש, ואמר להם כי בזאת המערה יש שנים עשר מתים לבושים בטליתות ואינם ידומין לבני אדם אלא למלאכים; *Sipur Masa'ot*, in Eisenstein, ed., *Ozar Masa'ot*, 61; *Sipur Masa'ot*, in Ya'ari, ed., *Masa'ot 'Erez Yisra'el*, 60; Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 97.

bis became part of both medieval Ashkenazi and Sephardi liturgy for *Yom Kippur* and *Tisha b'Av* respectively, and models for depicting later martyrs, especially in the context of anti-Jewish persecutions during the crusades.<sup>67</sup> Thus, that a non-Jew, probably a Christian and crusader, should be beaten by these holy rabbis who had suffered at the hands of Romans, whom the Jews considered the pro-genitors of the Christian world, produces a two-tiered level of retribution. First, the original martyrs punish a purported descendent of their persecutors, and second, the Jews having to deal with the crusaders obtain vicarious justice as their holy dead inflict posthumous suffering on one of the Christian occupiers of the Holy Land. While living Jews were helpless to defend “their” holy space, namely Jerusalem and the surrounding areas, the martyred dead were empowered to permanently discomfit the Gentile “invader” of their sanctified grave-space. “Correct” spiritual hierarchy is further emphasized in this passage by describing the rabbis as “like angels,” thus connecting the rabbis with the divine realm, whereas the non-Jew is beaten with rods heated with fire, recalling the fiery deaths that the Romans had inflicted on several of the ten martyrs.

In one passage Jacob ha-Cohen hints intriguingly at Christian veneration of one of the Jewish holy dead:

When a knight from Provence came and saw that the uncircumcised lit many lights upon the grave, he asked, “Who is this one?” And they answered, “It is a righteous Jew who heals the sick and helps the barren.” He said to them, “Why do you thus in honour of a Jew?” and took a stone and threw it on the ground and raised his hand to throw another stone. He was on horseback but fell and died. Immediately the captains and monks gathered and said that he was not punished because of the Jew, but because he wounded the honour of the teacher of Jesus, and Jesus was angry with him and killed him; they said this before all the people of the country.<sup>68</sup>

**67** Einbinder, *Beautiful Death*, 83, 167; Boustan, *From Martyr to Mystic*, esp. 88–92, 142–48, 173–74, 293; Fudeman, “These Things I Will Remember”; Goldschmidt, ed., *Maḥzor la-yamim ha-nora'im*, 2:568–573; “Midrash ‘Eleh ‘Ezkarah” and “Ma’aseh ‘esrah harugei malkhut” versions 2 and 3 in *Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:64–72, 6:19–30, 6:31–35 respectively; Reeg, *Geschichte von den Zehn Märtyren*. On the dating of the various manuscripts and recensions see 10–17, 19–20, 24–25, 26–30, 32. “Legend of the Ten Martyrs” in Stern and Mirsky *Rabbinic Fantasies*, 143–65. On anti-Jewish violence or persecution during the crusades generally, see Chazan, *European Jewry*; Chazan, *God, Humanity and History*; Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*; Einbinder, *Beautiful Death*; Einbinder, “Jewish Women Martyrs.” However, it is important to note that Jewish-Christian relations during the crusades varied. As Robert Chazan has indicated, even in the midst of these brutal encounters during the first crusade Jewish-Christian relations spanned the entire range from hatred to friendship. Jews turned to their Christian neighbours and the bishops for help and frequently received it against the crusaders’ violence. Chazan, *European Jewry*, 5, 29–30, 87–95, 195.

**68** כאשר בא פרש אחד מפרובינצא וראה כי מדליקין הערלים נרות רבות על הקבר אמר להם מי הוא זה? אמרו לו יהודי צדיק והוא מרפא חולים ומועיל לעקרות. אמר להם שוטים מה אתם עושים כך כבוד ליהודי! ולקח אבן אחת והשליך לארץ והגביה ידו להשליך אבן אחרת והיה רוכב על סוסו ונפל ומת. מיד נתקבצו ההגמונים והכומרים ואמרו שלא נענש בשביל היהודי אלא מפני שנגע בכבוד רבו של ישו, וכרה אפו של ישו והמית אותו. ואמרו כל זה לפני בני המדינה in Eisenstein, ed., *Ozar Masa’ot*, 60; Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 96. Also see discussion of this passage in Boušek, “...and the Ishmaelites Honour the Site.”

That the knight from Provence was able to talk to those at the grave suggests that these devotees were European Christians, although it is possible that the Jewish author took license with the practical barriers of cross-cultural communications in his narrative. If Jacob ha-Cohen's narrative is to be believed, the reputation of a Jewish "saint" had attracted the devotion of Western Christian settlers in Palestine, though these devotees were not among either the martial or religious elite. Furthermore, Jacob portrays both the knight and other members of the Christian leadership—captains and monks—as very concerned about the hierarchical implications both of Christians venerating one of the post-biblical Jewish holy dead and of such a saint's ability to kill one of their own in retaliation for disrespect.

Certainly for Jacob's readers, this tale would have confirmed the power and rightness of the Jewish God and his saint. The harshness with which Christian disrespect is punished in this text and others in Jacob ha-Cohen's account, again, correlates directly to the relatively greater enmity between European Jews and Christians, especially during the crusading period, in contrast to the array of attitudes toward Muslims expressed by European Jews.<sup>69</sup> Despite such negative feelings, however, Christians who were willing to revere the Jewish holy man were granted a space within his circle of devotees, much as Muslims were in other Jewish narratives. Like Jewish (and Christian) descriptions of Muslims at festivals and holy sites, here presenting the Christian "people of the country" (*benei ha-medinah* בני המדינה) as venerating the Jewish holy dead, also implies a kind of subjugation of, in this case, of Christians to Jews at least in the spiritual realm, and a recognition on the part of Christians of Jewish power. The Christian knight represents Christian martial capabilities, which the Jewish saint easily defeats—something living Jews could not. The military and religious leaders of the Christians in this narrative come across as foolish and desperate, forced to resort to lying to their people to disguise the true source of power behind the knight's death and to co-opting that power for their own holy person, Jesus. Their need to do so intimates Jesus' real powerlessness in contrast to the unidentified "righteous Jew" (*yehudi zadiq* יהודי צדיק) who in death performs many of the same miracles the Christians attribute to Jesus in life. Thus, while the Christians who come to the grave are accepted into the Jewish saint's circle—their answer to the knight suggests that they received healing by kindling lights on the grave—the narrative carefully constructs a hierarchy of Jews over Christians; a hierarchy that is much harsher in consequences and depiction of the Christian leadership than in many Jewish accounts of Muslim devotees of Jewish saints or participants in Jewish festivals. Even in the examples of Muslims being forced to pay their respects to a Jewish saint, the Muslims are injured or threatened with death rather than killed outright. The immediate death of the knight, in contrast to Muslims who make similar errors of disrespect in other accounts and are given the opportunity to correct their fault, underscores God's complete lack of toleration for Christian militant activity and disrespect toward the Jews.

From the Christian perspective, in this tale the Christians who sought healing from the righteous Jewish dead they also willingly expanded their community of saints to include someone outside their own confession. Obviously, a Jewish account of Chris-

<sup>69</sup> See note 68.

tian religious behaviour is biased, especially one as polemical as Jacob ha-Cohen's. As I shall show in the following chapter, however, European Christians venerating saints from other religious traditions does appear in other, Christian sources, and prompted consternation among religious leaders.

Occasionally Western Christian pilgrims discussed Jews and Jewish ritual in Egypt and the Levant in neutral or favourable terms.<sup>70</sup> Gucci notes seeing Jews as well as Saracens at Hebron.<sup>71</sup> Niccolo de Poggibonsi even attended a synagogue service at the encouragement of a Jewish friend, and describes the rituals he saw without polemicizing against them.<sup>72</sup> For the most part, however, when they discussed Jews at all, medieval western Christian travellers, like their Jewish counterparts, wrote more derogatorily of religious outsiders whom they knew from Europe than about Muslims whom they encountered in Egypt and the Levant.<sup>73</sup> Felix Fabri, for example, used Muslims as a medium for demonstrating the lowliness of the Jews on several occasions. In describing his visit to the site where Moses was believed to have received God's law, Fabri notes that "Arabs, Egyptians, Saracens and Turks" go on pilgrimage to the place. Yet he contrasts their presence along with that of Christians with the absence of Jews, who, according to him, are prevented by a miracle of God from going to that place which they hold most holy. Even if the Jews were not prevented, "the pagans would not accept them; and what is more, the Christians would not tolerate that they pray with them (the Christians)."<sup>74</sup> Fabri cites access, or the lack thereof, to a particular holy place to reaffirm what was in his eyes, the Jews' appropriately subjugated status, reflecting the situation between Jews and Christians in Western Europe.<sup>75</sup> In this passage Muslims and Christians worship together, or at least side by side, creating a common community in their mutual devotion to Moses. Jews, on the other hand, are rejected by humanity—the Christians and Muslims—and by God, placing them firmly at the bottom of both the spiritual and social hierarchy.

In other instances, while Fabri places Muslims as well as Christians above Jews, he is also careful to construct boundaries between Christians and Muslims. At one point he creates a tripartite hierarchy based on body odour. According to him, Muslims allow Christians to bathe with them because Christians do not smell, unlike the Muslims them-

**70** Chereyron, *Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, 90, 108

**71** Gucci, in Frescobaldi, Gucci, and Sigoli, *Visit to the Holy Places*, 123.

**72** Niccolò da Poggibonsi, *Libro d'oltramare*, 2:197–200; Niccolo, *Voyage Beyond the Seas*, 123.

**73** Chareyron, *Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, 37, 120–21, 152, 166–67.

**74** "Nam Arabes, Aegyptii, Sarraceni, Turci, de loquis mundi partibus ad hunc locum peregrinantur ob reverentiam Moysis. Dentis enim Judaeis de omnibus mundi partibus huc confluent homines de omni ritu et secta; Judaei soli non possint ascendere, et si possent, gentiles eos non aditterent, imo Chritiani eos secum orantes non sustinerent." Felix Fabri, *Evagatorium*, 2:459 fol. 46a; Felix Fabri, *Voyage en Egypte*, 1:194. For the explicit statement that Jews are prevented by a miracle of God from approaching Moses, see Felix Fabri, *Evagatorium*, 2:454; Felix Fabri, *Voyage en Egypte*, 1:185. Entire account of the veneration of Moses' site: Felix Fabri, *Evagatorium*, 2:454–459 fols. 44b–46a and Felix Fabri, *Voyage en Egypte*, 1:185–194.

**75** Felix Fabri's hostility toward Jews did not prevent him from traveling with them or taking advantage of their knowledge when it suited him however. See Limor, "Placing an Idea."

selves, who possess a terrible odour (*teterrimo feodore*). The Jews reek worse even than the Muslims, so that no one wants to bathe with them. Below the Jews, it would seem, are the Samaritans, with whom, according to Fabri, Jews refuse to bathe. Fabri establishes strongly negative religious associations with the Muslims by maintaining that the desire to rid themselves of stench, rather than piety, motivates Muslims' frequent ablutions, and by making an analogy in which Muslims are to Christians as lepers are to healthy people.<sup>76</sup> Lepers had a longstanding connection with sin within the Christian tradition as did bad smell, so without needing to elaborate, Fabri clearly links Muslims with sin by this comparison. Likewise, Jews, had long been depicted as stinking, thus, Fabri was drawing from a well-established trope in anti-Jewish discourse and applying it to Muslims as well as to Jews.<sup>77</sup> As with his comments about Muslims and Christians coming to bathe together at a pool associated with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph discussed earlier, he denigrates Muslim practice by presenting physical need as the basis for Muslim action rather than spirituality. Though Fabri's venom seems to be directed primarily against the Muslims, by categorizing the Jews as more repugnant than the Muslims, he indicates that all of the negative associations related to the Muslims apply to the Jews only more so.

As in his discussion of mutual reverence for Moses, bathing Muslims are paired with Christians, whereas Jews are completely excluded. Fabri limits the degree commonality between Christians and Muslims, however, by clearly demarcating them as sinful and disgusting because of their foul smell. Thus, in his narrative, Muslims function to malign Jews to a degree not possible were Fabri to have confined his discussion to Christians and Jews alone. He also co-opts the power and prestige of Muslims for Christianity while simultaneously belittling the Muslims; Muslims, who, in the Levant and Egypt, possess the political power to exclude *all* minorities from their presence in worship and daily activities, do not merely allow Christians to bathe with them, they are *desperate* for Christian company for humiliating reasons. Their similarity to Jews (even though Fabri presents Muslims as somewhat better than Jews), their shameful problem in contrast to Christians, and their desire to be with Christians all point to Muslims' spiritual subjugation.

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**76** Felix Fabri, *Evagatorium*, 2:370, fol. 15b–16a; Felix Fabri, *Voyage en Egypte*, 1:27–28; Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam*, 1:33n 3. For the belief in baptism as a cure of Jews and Muslims' "deformities"—though not necessarily smell—see Resnick, *Marks of Distinction*, 33, 97–99, 122–24, 237, 240–42, 246–47; Hahn, "The Difference the Middle Ages Makes." Speros Vryonis mentions a number of Greek Christian sources which also speak of Muslims having their children baptized in order to remove a bad smell: Vryonis, "Religious Changes and Patterns in the Balkans," esp. 174. Also see Taylor, "The Syriac Baptism of St. John"; Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam*, 1:31–34. Compare with Bertrandon de la Broquière, *Le Voyage d'outremer*, 90, who makes a similar remark about his Greek guide, who was seemingly either of mixed Christian-Muslim parentage or a convert to Islam. This trope seems to be an extension or transposition of the Christian idea that Jews smelled bad because of their unbelief and unhealthy customs on to Muslims. On this kind of Christian anti-Jewish rhetoric see Resnick, *Marks of Distinction*, 232–43.

**77** Taylor, "The Syriac Baptism of St. John"; Resnick, *Marks of Distinction*, 93–143, 232–43; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 30–32, 39–42, 89–90, 100–103, 112, 168–69, 181–82, 187–95; Allen, *The Wages of Sin*, 33–37; Brody, *The Disease of the Soul*; Flandrin, *Le sexe et l'Occident*, 163; Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, 177–88.

tion to Christianity, regardless of the political reality. Both Jews and Muslims, therefore, become rhetorical tools for representing one another and for exalting Christianity.

Among the many stories of the Virgin Mary and her interactions with non-Christians that circulated in Europe, was the tale of the Virgin coming to assist a Jewish woman near death in the throes of a difficult birth. In the version contained in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* by King Alfonso X (1221–1284), Mary herself, “Gracious Queen of queens, remedy of women in need,” instigates the encounter by sending the woman a vision of a great light and a voice encouraging her to call upon the Mother of God. The Jewish woman does so, delivers safely, but is denounced as an apostate by the women attending her when they hear her invoke Mary. So as “not to quarrel” with them, the woman takes her newborn son and her daughter to the church of St. Cecilia and they are all baptized.<sup>78</sup>

In the *Cantigas*, the incident is a local miracle—the text indicates the specific church to which the woman goes for her conversion—in which the Virgin Mary, in her capacity of helper of women generally, goes to an individual Jewish woman in distress. No recurring Jewish recognition of Mary’s power is implied. Greffin Affagart and Suriano, both from the sixteenth century, include a similar story in their travel narratives but alter it in significant ways. As in the *Cantigas*, the authors ground the story in a specific locale (Zante and Venice respectively). However, a Christian family, not the Virgin herself, suggests that the imperilled Jewish woman turn to Mary, this time by looking at an image of her. Once the Jewish woman has safely given birth, she does not convert, rather she throws out the image, saying, “out Mary, out!”<sup>79</sup> This detail differentiates the story both from its counterparts in European miracle collections, like the *Cantigas*, and from stories in Christian pilgrimage narratives in which Muslims call upon Mary for aid. In the *Cantigas*, the Virgin actively seeks out the Jewish woman and “recruits” her indicating the Virgin herself desires the Jewish woman to become one of her devotees. In Affagart and Suriano’s accounts, Mary’s aid comes through intermediaries—the Christian family who urges the woman and the image of Mary, rather than any personalized vision as in the *Cantigas*. These factors serve to distance the Jewish woman from Mary, even before she casts Mary’s image away. In Christian accounts of Muslim encounters with Mary, while the Muslims do not convert, they permanently revere Mary as a result of her intervention.<sup>80</sup> In so doing, they simultaneously recognize the “truth” of the Christian saint and become part of her extended community with the Christians, albeit as lesser members in these Christian texts. Affagart and Suriano’s tale of the Jewish woman in childbirth follows the trope of members of the religious other compelled to venerate

**78** Alfonso X, *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, Cantiga 89; Alfonso X, *Songs of Holy Mary*, Cantiga 89. For other examples of this story contained in collections of miracles of the Virgin Mary see John, of Garland, *Stella Maris*, no. 37, pp. 127–28; Jean Gobi, *La Scala Coeli*, no. 660, pp. 445–47 and discussion in Remensnyder, *La Conquistadora*, 196–97; Trivison, “Prayer and Prejudice in the CSM”; Cuffel, “Henceforward.”

**79** “Fora Maria fort!” Affagart, *Relation de Terre Sainte*, 33; “Fora Maria! Fora Maria!” Suriano, *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, chap. xli, Italian, 95, English, 108. Jean Gobi also indicates that neighbours suggested the woman call upon Mary. See note 78.

**80** In addition to examples already cited in this chapter see note 33.

a particular saint, however, by casting away the image of Mary as soon as the crisis is over, the Jewish woman rejects the possibility of being included in any expanded community of devotees.<sup>81</sup> Suriano takes the story a step farther and generalizes so that all Jewish women in Venice must call upon the Virgin Mary in order to give birth.<sup>82</sup> Thus he creates a kind of permanent, unwilling Jewish cult of the Virgin Mary, in which Jews are continually calling and then repudiating Mary. Jews are dependent on and subjugated to a Christian saint, but since they alone exclude themselves from the saint's "community," they are at the very bottom of the religious hierarchy, much as they are in Fabri's treatment of Jews in relation to Muslims and Christians.<sup>83</sup>

## Conclusions

European Jews and Christians *did* imagine that holy people, and participation in pilgrimage to their grave sites, could create a broader community that undermined strict divisions between Jew and non-Jew or Christian and non-Christian. Travel to a distant place and participation in a ritual of veneration all facilitated this. Thus, one sees the basic characteristics outlined by the Turners for spontaneous *communitas*.<sup>84</sup> Nonetheless, these examples *also* affirm the observations of subsequent scholars, namely that holy places, people, and, more rarely, rituals, held in common between multiple groups were also the focus of competing discourses.<sup>85</sup> European Jews and Christians used the presence of the religious other to affirm their own religious world-view which placed their own community at the top of a religious hierarchy. For both groups, Muslims occupied a kind of middle ground of belonging and otherness, desirable, yet potential enemy, in need of disciplining. European Jews and Christians travelling to Muslim-controlled lands had to come to terms with a third party being socially and politically dominant over them—something that might have been less shocking to any coming from Iberia, where Muslims still ruled part of the region, but unaccustomed to any from other regions. I would suggest, that Muslims, because of their political power, and demonstrable ability to beat the Christians in war, were treated as the more desirable religious other; their power gave greater prestige to the saint or *zadiq*. European Jewish and Christian depictions of one another in the role of "participant" in revering a holy person or site reflected the relatively tenuous relationships, both rhetorical and real-life, between Jews and Christians in various parts of Latin Europe. The religious hierarchies which European Jewish and Christian travellers to the Middle East present in their narratives may also be interpreted as a kind of resistance: resistance to the challenge presented by Muslim power and success, even as these Jews and Christians sought to co-opt it rhetorically;

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**81** This action also attributes a certain level of malice toward Christianity usually absent in Christian pilgrimage accounts' depiction of Muslims. For a discussion of these stories in the context of shifting developments in European Marian devotion, see Cuffel, "Henceforward."

**82** Suriano, *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, chap. xli, Italian, 94, English, 108.

**83** Overall, Felix Fabri is more negative in tone toward Muslims than either Suriano or Affagart.

**84** For references and discussion see Introduction.

**85** Hayden, *Antagonistic Tolerance*; Eade and Sallnow, *Contesting the Sacred*.

and resistance to one another, as European Jews and Christians found themselves in a situation in which they were on an equal plain with one another, as minorities under Muslim rule.

Applying the divisions suggested by Benjamin Kedar, most of the “sharing” described in these texts, would come closest to falling under his second classification, namely, “inegalitarian” convergence, in which one group controls a site which two or more groups hold holy.<sup>86</sup> Robert Hayden’s concept of “antagonistic” sharing or tolerance would also seem relevant.<sup>87</sup> Yet, the lack of Jewish or Christian control of these sites and the fact that they were not part of daily coexistence for these Jews and Christians in their homeland make the theories of either of these scholars an imperfect match. Rather European Jewish and Christian discussions of holy sites in the Islamicate Mediterranean and their relationship to these places had to be constructed around a third, dominant party in a foreign land. Thus, the creation of “*communitas*” and hierarchy was bound together. In pilgrimage, European Jews and Christians were able to imagine a spiritual world in which they were at the pinnacle of that hierarchy and Muslims the powerful, yet controlled devotees of the same holy “saints” and festivals, and one another as either irrelevant, and therefore absent, or punished into respect, like recalcitrant Muslims, yet frequently more despised, and barely, if at all, part of the community of the holy figure.

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**86** Kedar, “Convergences...Saydnaya and the Knights Templar”; Kedar, “Convergences...Saydnaya.” For a discussion see the beginning of this chapter.

**87** Hayden, *Antagonistic Tolerance*.

## FORCEFUL SAINTS AND COMPELLING RITUALS

### REAL AND IMAGINED JEWISH AND MUSLIM PARTICIPATION IN CHRISTIAN RITUALS AND SAINT CULTS FROM BYZANTIUM TO WESTERN EUROPE

#### Introduction

Early Byzantine hagiographies frequently contain tales of Jewish and Saracen encounters with Christian holy people, who either in life or as part of their repertoire of posthumous miracles, compel, astound or coax conversions from the non-Christians they encounter.<sup>1</sup> Many of these, focus on the Virgin Mary, such as the account of the Jews' attempt to attack her funeral bier, and then they or their representative become stuck to the bier or are struck with illness, until they or their representative repents or converts. A well-known and widely circulated posthumous miracle is the tale of the Jewish boy, who is variously a shepherd, the son of a glass-blower, or a bath-house owner, who converts either because he wishes to eat with his fellow shepherds, who are Christian, or because, along with his Christian schoolmates, he hear songs to the Virgin in church. The father attempts to kill his son, when he learns of his conversion, but the Virgin protects the child, which, depending on the version, results in the conversion of the child's mother and sometimes other Jews. These and other tales of Mary's dealings (usually posthumous) with Jews were translated and circulated in Arabic, Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, Ge'ez, Latin and sundry European vernaculars, and became part of the standard repertoire of Christian anti-Jewish narratives.<sup>2</sup>

Mary was not the only saint around whom such miracles developed within Byzantium. Generally, however, they follow the same typology as Marian miracles involving non-Christians, namely conversion through miracle—sometimes via brutal treatment by the saint, as in the case of the miracles attributed to the sixth-century saint, Simeon

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1 Déroche, "Regards croisés des hérésiologues"; Csepregi, "The Theological Other"; Von Falkenhausen, *Auf der Suche nach den Juden*.

2 On the Dormition tale see Shoemaker, *Mary in Early Christian Faith and Devotion*, 101–39; Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*; Shoemaker, "Let Us Go and Burn Her Body:". On the Jewish boy in the oven see Butts and Gross, *History of the Slave of Christ*; Rose, *The Murder of William of Norwich*, 173–82; Duffy, "The Jewish Boy Legend"; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 173–74, 218–19; Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 8–28; Bagby, "The Figure of the Jew"; Dahan, "Les Juifs dans les Miracles"; Cerulli, *Il Libro Etiopico dei Miracoli di Maria*, 486; Villecourt, "Les collections Arabes des Miracles de la Sainte Vierge." Butts and Gross, Shoemaker (in *Dormition*), Rubin, Cerulli, and Villecourt all also discuss the exchange of such stories between Byzantium, Europe, and other Christian communities throughout Asia and North and East Africa throughout their works cited here. Also see Baraz, "Bartholomeo de Trento's Book of Marian Miracles"; Baraz, "Coptic-Arabic of Western Marian Legends."

Salos, who rendered one Jew mute and broke the glassware of another Jewish artisan until each converted.<sup>3</sup> Frequently, the miracle and resulting conversion stemmed not from a human saint, but rather a holy space or object, such as an icon or the eucharist. Sometimes the object is merely wondrous, like the light streaming from the cross, which Constantine the Jew sees while observing a Christian procession, and which contributes to his eventual conversion to and missionizing for Christianity.<sup>4</sup> At others, Jews, Muslims, or “Saracens” of non-Christian but otherwise unclear religious affiliation, convert (or die if they remain unbelievers) as a result of seeing an icon of Jesus or the bread and wine of the eucharist appear as a (dismembered) bloody child. These, scholars have posited, relate as much to debates within the Byzantine Christian community about the real presence in the eucharist and/or icons during the iconoclast controversies of the eighth and ninth centuries, as they do with polemicizing about Jews or Muslims. The function of non-Christians in these stories, is, as Vincent Déroche has argued, to use the religious other as witness to the truth, as Byzantine authors understood it, so that Jews, “Saracens” and Muslims serve both as edifying “stand-ins” for a variety of Christians, whom the Byzantine Orthodox authors deemed heretics, and as “proof” of the truth of these authors’ theological stance, in that even non-Christians are miraculously brought to testify and/or convert to it.<sup>5</sup> An important caveat should be added, however. While both Jews and Muslims are often “hermeneutical”, i.e. serving as figures by whom authors might chide their fellow Christians, the representation of the two groups are not identical. In a significant number, albeit not all, Jews are portrayed as seeking to do violence to Christian objects as a kind of reenactment of the crucifixion of Jesus. In the case of the true cross legend, Jews hide the truth and power of a Christian holy object.<sup>6</sup> Muslims, by contrast, are portrayed as expressing malice through disrespect toward Christian buildings or attempts to destroy them, but their aggression is not aimed at the core persons or symbols of Christianity.

Most of these narratives were written prior to or in the early centuries of Islam, and thus fall outside the primary chronological focus of this book. However, many of these tales, such as the ones relating to St. Nicholas, which will be discussed in detail below,

**3** Leontius of Neopolis, *Vie de Syméon le Fou*, 88, 97; Déroche, “Regards croisés des hérésiologues.”

**4** *Vie de Constantin le Juif*; Déroche, “Regards croisés des hérésiologues.”

**5** Sahas, *Byzantium and Islam*, 179–81, 215–16, 407–20; Papaconstantinou, “Saints and Saracens”; Déroche, “Regards croisés des hérésiologues”; Peers, *Sacred Shock*, 45–49.

**6** Drijvers and Drijvers, *Finding of the True Cross*; Agapius of Hieropolis, *Kitāb al-Unwān*, Part 1, PO 5:628–30, 634, 636–65; part 2 PO, 7:487–88; part 3, PO, 8:439–40, 467–68; Labubnā bar Sennāḳ, *Labubneay Diwanagir Dpri Edesioy T’ult’ Abgaru*, 62–68; Pogossian, “Visions of the Cross”; Drijvers, “Helena Augusta, the Cross and the Myth”; Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*; Baert, *Heritage of Holy Wood*. My thanks to Prof. Zaroui Pogossian of the University of Florence for summarizing this version (Labubnāy) of the Armenian text of the Legend of Abgar for me and allowing me to read her forthcoming article. On the concept of “hermeneutical” or “spectral” Judaism and related concepts see Dege-Müller, “Between Heretics and Jews”; Pogossian, “Jews in Armenian Apocalyptic Traditions”; Krummel, *Crafting Jewishness*; Krueger, *The Spectral Jew*; Tomasch, “Postcolonial Chaucer”; Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 1–17; Lipton, *Images of Intolerance*, 82–111; Olster, *Roman Defeat*.

travelled and/or were retold or reread in new cultural, chronological, and geographic contexts. They also served as a model for later narratives in both the Eastern and Western Mediterranean, for using the religious other as “proof” of holy individuals, spaces, or objects’ validity. Also passed to later authors was the cumulative hierarchy implicit in many of these early hagiographies of Muslims being somewhat less undesirable than Jews. In the early Byzantine context, similar to those of Western Europe, which was outside or somewhat distanced from the reality of Muslim political power, conversion or death was frequently the only alternative imagined. To envision otherwise would be tantamount to according legitimacy to “heretics”—often the real target of these hagiographies, or to those whom Byzantine Christians thought or hoped should be subjugated to them, namely Jews and Muslims. By projecting conversion or death on those deemed outsiders, Byzantine authors and those who followed their example lay claim to religious truth and power unambiguously and completely. These stories nevertheless relate to shared saints and rituals, in that Jews and Muslims are often depicted as seeking assistance from a Christian saint, or being present and thus, unwittingly a marginal participant in a Christian ritual. Either scenario results in their becoming a permanent, full member of the Christian community.

In the Western Christian and Jewish travel accounts analyzed in the previous chapter, Christians and Jews narrated shared religious participation in a context in which Christians and Jews functioned practically on an equal plane: as visiting foreigners who were both members of religious minority groups. The admired third party in this scenario were the Muslims, who also held the privileged, dominant religious and political status. We have seen how both Jews and Christians from Europe sought to tailor their accounts so that Muslims served as witnesses to the truth and power of each group’s religious claims, as they imagined Muslims, and sometimes one another, as submitting to the Jewish and Christian holy dead, in ways that none would do to living members of either community. In Latin Europe, where Christians held sway, Christian authors were free to imagine Jewish and Muslim veneration of Christian saints in ways that confirmed Christian truth and power. While some of the same patterns exist in both Christian travel narratives and hagiographies written entirely in a European context, Christian authors of hagiographies featuring encounters of the religious other were often more forceful in their rhetorical efforts to resolve the ambiguities of belonging which interreligious veneration presented.

In Europe, such hagiographies constituted an imaginary “staging” of instances of Muslim or Jewish veneration of a Christian saint or site. Yet Christians, in their dominant position were able to do more than merely fantasize about Jewish and Muslim obeisance to Christian saintly power; they were able to require Muslims and Jews to literally enact their roles as witnesses to Christian truth in the form of participation in Christian festivals. As we shall see, sometimes this interreligious participation seems to have been voluntary, since joining civic processions was a way of asserting belonging and status within the larger community, to the point that Jews and Muslims competed over their roles in such celebrations, and Muslims joined Christians in ritual games of violence against the Jews. Very often, however, Jewish and Muslim participation in and “donations” to civic ceremonies, religious processions, and foundations were far from volun-

tary, and their compulsory character added an additional symbolic layer to the enacted subjugation of Jews and Muslims in these celebrations. Jews and Muslims were not passive in this process, however. They acted out and sometimes wrote counter-interpretations of shared rituals aimed at subverting Christian claims and demonstrating the truth of their own position as God's chosen people.

### Veneration of the Other in Western Mediterranean Hagiographies

Later medieval Christian *exempla*, compilations of edifying stories often used in preaching, and collections of saints' tales show many of the same tendencies present in pilgrimage texts. For the most part they focus on individual incidents of encounter between the holy person (dead or alive) and the Jew or Christian. Jews or Muslims who resist paying their respects to a given Christian holy figure are punished. Most stories focused on Jews' and Muslims' interactions with the Virgin Mary; however, occasionally other saints punish or intercede for non-Christians. Regarding the Virgin Mary, miracles of encounter with the religious other written in Northern Europe usually end with either the death or conversion of the non-Christian. In this characteristic, they resemble early Byzantine hagiographic models. In the Middle East, as we have seen, European Christians exult in Muslim and to a lesser extent Jewish veneration of her, even unwillingly given, but do not assume that Muslims or Jews convert to Christianity. In Iberia such hagiographic tales can go either way; sometimes they follow the Northern European pattern, whereas at others no conversion occurs.<sup>7</sup> Other figures to whom Christians imagined Jews or Muslims turned include St. Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636 CE) and St. Nicholas. Here too, Christians narrated both willing and compulsory veneration of the saints in terms which ultimately confirmed Christian religious superiority.

### Drawing Boundaries, Extorting Praise: St. Isidore of Seville

While earlier accounts of St. Isidore's activities exist, either alone or embedded in other works, the *Miracula Sancti Isidori* is especially rich in tales of encounter, conversion, punishment, and/or shared veneration of a Christian saint by Muslims or Jews. It is a collection of post-mortem miracles purportedly performed by Isidore of Seville which were composed by the chronicler, Lucas de Tuy (d. 1249), in part to celebrate the activities of this saint after the transferal of his remains to the San Isidoro monastery in Leon.<sup>8</sup> The manuscripts that have survived are late—sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>9</sup> On the one hand this late dating raises the spectre of later alterations to the original, medieval narrative, and on the other, it indicates the enduring popularity of the collection, in which Isidore is recast as a defender of Christianity against heretics, Muslims, and

<sup>7</sup> See previous chapter and Cuffel, "Henceforward."

<sup>8</sup> Lucas de Tuy, *Liber de Miraculis Sancti Isidori*; Drews, *The Unknown Neighbor*, 314; Henriët, "Hagiographie léonaise et pédagogie de la foi"; Henriët "Rex, lex, plebs"; Henriët, "Hagiographie et politique"; Wamba, "Hagiografía y mentalidades."

<sup>9</sup> Henriët, "Hagiographie et politique."

Jews, starting at a time when Isidore's actual polemical works were falling into disuse.<sup>10</sup> Certainly some of the miracles are more about praising Isidore as an effective martial saint, able to repel Muslims, much in the same way that the Virgin Mary was often conceived as defending Christian battlements and territories against all enemies.<sup>11</sup> At other times Isidore punishes Muslims or other unbelievers for their disrespect for his own or other holy sites. Those fortunate enough to find relief from the saint's retribution, do so by converting to Christianity.<sup>12</sup>

Not all *exempla* in *Miracula Sancti Isidori* centre around punishment, however. In chapter 14, some Jews take refuge in Isidore's sanctuary. One of them is horribly afflicted in his legs and feet, but when he offers to convert to Christianity if Isidore cures him, miraculously the weakness leaves the Jews' legs. He, his family, and, eventually, many other Jews convert because of this miracle.<sup>13</sup> While in many ways this story follows the pattern of other *exempla* featuring the conversion of Jews or Muslims, it is striking that the tale assigns initiative to Jews who seek out help from the Christian saint. Christians and Jews alike weep and praise the saint, thus the fact that Jews, or one Jew in particular, sought and received help is counted to the saint's glory.

Ephraim Shoham-Steiner rightly warns against taking such Christian claims of Jews turning to Christian saints at face value; invariably such tales have a clear rhetorical, polemical function. The current narrative is no different. Yet at the same time, as Shoham-Steiner has demonstrated, Jews were very much aware of the appeal that miraculous powers of Christian saints' shrines had on their co-religionists, and occasionally polemicists and rabbis created their own tales to underscore the sinfulness and eventually misfortune of any who sought healing at such sanctuaries.<sup>14</sup> Shoham-Steiner's examples come from Northern Europe; however, persistent tales in Iberia, even ones written by Christians, of Jews seeking help from Christian saints, need to be considered carefully in light of references in Jewish texts that such visitation of Christian shrines was a concern. Indeed, the *Miracula Sancti Isidori* contains other tales of not only Jews but also Muslims praising and seeking aid from Isidore. Miracle 15 recounts how Isidore

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**10** Drews, *Unknown Neighbor*, 313–16. On Lucas de Tuy's polemical treatise against the Albigensians, *De altera vita*, which originally accompanied the *Miracula* see Henriët, "Hagiographie et politique."

**11** Lucas de Tuy, *Liber de Miraculis Sancti Isidori*, chap. 16 fol. 29b–33a, chap. 32, fols. 91–103, chap. 44, fols. 172–76. On Mary as miraculous defender of Christians in martial contexts see, for example, Alfonso X *Cantigas/ Songs of Holy Mary*, nos. 99, 185, 215, 229; Étienne de Bourbon, *Anecdotes historiques*, no. 318; Remensnyder, *La Conquistadora*; Cuffel, "Henceforward"; Trivison, "Prayer and Prejudice in the CSM."

**12** Lucas de Tuy, *Liber de Miraculis Sancti Isidori*, chap. 2, fols. 5a–6a, chap. 4, fols. 6b–8a, chap. 21, fols. 49–54, chap. 23, fols. 58–61. In chap. 2, Zaida, the daughter of the Muslim king, Benabeth is simply described as converting to Christianity and "renouncing Muhammad and all his superstitions" "Mahometo et omnibus ejus superstitionibus abrenuntians" (fol. 5b) because she has seen unspecified miracles that Christ has wrought through Isidore. Her father resists and eventually dies at the end of the story. Other miracles are more direct and violent.

**13** Lucas de Tuy, *Liber de Miraculis Sancti Isidori*, chap. 14, fols. 23a–25b.

**14** Shoham-Steiner, "Jews and Healing."

caused a mute boy to attain speech and the trials the boy and his parents endured when the authorities questioned the authenticity of the miracle. Eventually its veracity is confirmed, causing much rejoicing:

and he (the child) extorted praises from the mouth of enemies by divine providence to the glory of Catholic truth by his confession of Isidore. It was delightful and cheering to see Jews and Saracens praising Jesus Christ Son of God with Christians and producing devotion for his most sacred mother the Virgin Mary.<sup>15</sup>

Here the praise of the Jews and Muslims, the “enemies,” is depicted as being forced—extorted (*extorsit*)—from them rather than willingly given. The emphasis on their being constrained to praise resembles versions of the miracle of the Jewess calling on the Virgin Mary to aid her in childbirth only to reject the Virgin after a safe delivery.<sup>16</sup> “Shared” veneration is in fact an expression of power and hierarchy, in which the non-Christians have no choice but join Christians in their reverence of the Christian holy person. In this miracle of Isidore, however, it is not their personal well-being at stake and the saint does not aid them directly. Rather the benefit accrues to another Christian, and Jews and Muslims are obliged to recognize the miraculous nature of the intervention for a Christian child. Furthermore, the Christian author depicts the Jews and Muslims as praising Jesus and Mary, all to the glory of the Catholic faith. Thus, while Isidore is accredited with the honour enacting the healing and causing Jews and Muslims to join Christians in praise, the ultimate object of their acclamation, and by implication, their subjugation, is to figures which are central to the entirety of the Christian religion. As in some miracle narratives by Western authors in the Middle East, Muslims and Jews express veneration, but do not convert. In this instance, however, there is no suggestion of a two-tiered community of devotees of a particular holy person, in which those outside a given author’s religious community are accorded a liminal, quasi-accepted status while still retaining their status as the religious other. Instead, the lines of alterity and concomitant enmity remain clearly articulated.

The account of shared veneration in chapter 17 is milder. The chapter begins with the following observation:

The mausoleum at which his sacred members were taken, began to shine because of many miracles, so that Gentiles and Jews eagerly gathered to receive a remedy for health by the merit of saint Protector, alleging by obstinate praise, saying; because although the soldiers have carried away the holy body of Isidore, nevertheless the spirit has not left Spain.<sup>17</sup>

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**15** “et de inimicorum ore providential divina ad glorificandam catholicam veritatem per confessorem suum Isidorum laudes extorsit. Erat iocundum et hilare, Judaeos et Sarracenos cum Christiolis videre laudes Jesu Christo Filio Dei et sacratissimae Virigini Mariae Matri ejus devote depromere”; Lucas de Tuy, *Liber de Miraculis Sancti Isidori*, chap. 14, fol.29°.

**16** Greffin Affagart, *Relation de Terre Sainte*, 33; Suriano, *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, chap. 41, Italian, 95, English, 108.

**17** “Mausoleum à quo sacra ejus membra fuerunt abstracta, multis coepit fulgere miraculis, ita ut Gentiles et Judaei certatim confluerent sanitatis remedia per merita sancti Presulis percepturi,

A shrine is built in a cave, and many believe that the presence of their patron, Isidore, is hidden in this place. The hope is expressed that if the Muslims invade in the future, the saint will guard the Christians, and an extensive list of the various sicknesses which Isidore healed is given. No further mention of Jewish or Gentile veneration is made.<sup>18</sup> What is meant by the term “Gentile” (*Gentiles*) is unclear. It may be meant to reflect New Testament language which divided between “Jew” and “Gentile,” or Gentile may have meant Arian Christian, “Pagan” i.e. polytheistic, non-Christian, or Muslim. The latter two are the most likely options, since “*Gentiles*” clearly means Muslims in other instances.<sup>19</sup> Thus, in this tale, various non-Christians serve as witnesses to the miraculous power of the Christian saint and are drawn to the illuminated grave in hopes of healing. In another *exemplum*, a Muslim father seeks Isidore’s healing for his son who is possessed by a demon. When the father attempts to renege on his promises to Isidore, the demons return to torment his son even worse than before. The tale ends with conversion and praise to Isidore for assisting not only Christians but bringing Jews and Gentiles to the healing of baptism.<sup>20</sup> Together these narratives indicate that, regardless of whether Jews and other non-Christians travelled to Isidore’s shrine in truth, non-Christian recognition of Isidore’s sanctity and power was very much part of the rhetoric of sanctity in the *Miracula Sancti Isidori*. Indeed, later in the collection, Christians and Muslims compete for Isidore’s wealth and power.<sup>21</sup> Predictably, the Muslim kings fail in their attempt to co-opt Isidore’s relics or holy space, and are punished accordingly, so that Isidore not only serves as protector against Christians’ (Muslim) martial enemies, but the struggle for his blessing becomes a mirror for the Christian vision of the *reconquista* itself.

### Mercantile Saint for All Faiths: St. Nicholas

The *Miracula Sancti Isidori* reflect the religious dynamics and rhetoric within a very restricted context in medieval (and early modern) Iberia. The case of St. Nicholas is rather different. First it should be noted that there were two saints of this name. St. Nicholas of Myra (ca. 270–343) sometimes also known as St. Nicholas of Bari, because his bones were moved from Myra in what is now part of modern-day Turkey, to the Italian city of Bari in ca. 1087. The other, St. Nicholas of Sion, lived in the sixth century CE, in the same region as St. Nicholas of Myra and he also died in Myra. While each had a separate hagiographical tradition, the cult and stories about the two saints became intermingled.<sup>22</sup> The cult of St. Nicholas was widespread in both Byzantium and Italy, especially southern Italy, during the early Middle Ages; the saint’s popularity through-

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contentiosa laude causantes et dicentes; quia licet corpus sanctissimum Legionenses detulerint, Isidori tamen spiritus Hispalim non reliquit”; Lucas de Tuy, *Liber de Miraculis Sancti Isidori*, fol. 33a.

**18** Lucas de Tuy, *Liber de Miraculis Sancti Isidori*, fols. 33a–37.

**19** For example, Lucas de Tuy, *Liber de Miraculis Sancti Isidori*, chap. 19, fol. 45.

**20** Lucas de Tuy, *Liber de Miraculis Sancti Isidori*, chap. 19, fols. 40–45.

**21** Lucas de Tuy, *Liber de Miraculis Sancti Isidori*, chaps. 20 and 21, fols. 45–54.

**22** Cioffari, “San Nicola e il mare;” Meisen, *Nikolauskult*, 50–51, 60–71; Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos*, 1:vi–ix.

out the Mediterranean and in Western Europe, increased after the translation of his relics to Bari. He was especially honoured in France and Germany and numerous churches were dedicated to him throughout these regions continuing through the seventeenth century.<sup>23</sup> Like the Virgin Mary, St. Nicholas was celebrated as being the protector of all, and venerated in all lands, and as being a guardian of those at sea, even to the point of competing with Mary as a maritime intercessor. He also became strongly associated with the protection of merchants, both within and outside the context of seafaring, although even in this he competed with Mary, whose intervention on behalf of the Jew, Abraham against the dishonest Byzantine Christian merchant Theodore, strongly resembles tales of similar interventions by St. Nicholas.<sup>24</sup> Significantly for our purposes, St. Nicholas was also increasingly portrayed as a protector of Christians against Muslims, Jews, and “barbarians” or “pagans”, although the end result of Nicholas’ interactions with non-Christians was often their conversion to Christianity.<sup>25</sup> St. Nicholas’ two functions, defender of Christians against non-Christians and protector of goods and the interests of merchants and bankers sometimes came together in a single story. For example, in *Le jeu de Saint Nicolas* by Jehan Bodel (ca. 1165–ca. 1210 CE), a *trouvère* from Arras in Northern France, the French “*pruedom*”, Durans, who is captured by Muslims while he is praying to St. Nicholas, is mocked for his faith, and the statue of St. Nicholas is left to guard the open treasury of the king. If the saint/statue fails, Duran’s life is forfeit. St. Nicholas foils the would-be robbers, and the king and other Muslims are so amazed at the miracle that they convert to Christianity and become devotees of the saint.<sup>26</sup> The conversion of the Muslims in face of defeat through the miracles of a Christian saint follows the patterns of encounters with the religious other found in northern European Marian miracles.<sup>27</sup> The fact that St. Nicholas was required to guard the Muslims’ treasure harkens back to his role as protector of merchants and goods. Calling the protagonist “*pruedom*” also indicates that Durans was a pious civilian, rather than a knight, possibly a merchant, or advisor, again linking the saint’s actions to a particular professional group.<sup>28</sup> The lines between belonging and religious outsider are clearly drawn in this text. This is not the

**23** Cioffari, “San Nicola e il mare”; Roze, ed., *Saint Nicolas et les Lorrains*, 15–16, 31–45, 63–82; Meisen, *Nikolauskult*, 50–93.

**24** Remensnyder, “Mary, Star of the Multi-Confessional Mediterranean”; Cioffari, “San Nicola e il mare”; Roze, ed., *Saint Nicolas et les Lorrains*, 15–16; Meisen, *Nikolauskult*, 64, 66, 89–90, 245–53, 270–75, 284–87. Early accounts of the miracles of St. Nicholas of Sion regularly include a series of sea-related miracles. See: *Life of Saint Nicholas of Sion*, nos. 27, 28, 30, 31, 36, 37, 38, pp. 50/51–56/57, 62/63–66/67. For the story of the Merchant Theodore and the Jew, Abraham see Holo, *Byzantine Jewry*, 161–62. This story was also widespread throughout Europe. See, for example, Boyarin, *Miracles of the Virgin*, 29–32. Sometimes it is an icon of Jesus rather than Mary which performs the miracle. See Majeska, *Russian Travelers*, 356–60.

**25** Bodel, *Le jeu de Saint Nicolas*; Roze, *Saint Nicolas et les Lorrains*, 33, 57; Meisen, *Nikolauskult*, 62–63, 264–67, 281–84.

**26** Bodel, *Le jeu de Saint Nicolas*, lines.19–112, 1238–1533, pp. 67–70, 124–137.

**27** Cuffel, “Henceforward.”

**28** My thanks to Prof. Lynn Ramey of Vanderbilt University for her suggestions about the term “*pruedom*” in this context. All errors are my own.

case in all legends regarding the saint. Various versions of a tale in which St. Nicholas assists a Jew against a cheating Christian—usually a merchant—began circulating in hymns and miracle collections in France and Italy from the twelfth century onwards.<sup>29</sup> Having a Christian saint work against his own co-religionists to answer the intercession of a Jew troubled the clear divisions presented in a tale such as the one in Bodel's *Jeu de Saint Nicolas*. In such stories Jews were presented as not only being part of a Christian saint's community but as having greater claim to the saint's aid than some Christians. Such a suggestion served as a counter to harsher hagiographic traditions which were uniformly negative toward Jews, and furthermore challenged neat religious hierarchies; something which discomfited certain collectors of *exempla*.

The tension between the impulse toward exclusion and the narrative tradition of inclusion of the Jewish religious other and recognizing that veneration by non-Christians accrued to Nicholas' honour may be clearly seen in a thirteenth-century compendium of saints' lives, by the Dominican, Jacobus de Voragine (1244–1298 CE). The *Legenda Aurea* contains two stories about Jews' interactions with St. Nicholas. In the first tale a (Christian) man borrows money from a Jew and makes an oath on the altar of St. Nicholas that he will repay it as soon as possible. The Christian delays payment however, and then attempts to trick the Jew by handing the Jew his staff in which he has hidden the money, and then swearing before the judge that he has given the Jew the money owed. Later, the dishonest individual is run over by a coach and killed, and his staff containing the money is broken. Although bystanders urge the Jew to collect the money, he declines unless St. Nicholas will resurrect the dead man, at which point the Jew promises he will be baptized. The borrower is immediately restored to life, and the Jew becomes a Christian. Another Jew, seeing the powers of St. Nicholas, purchases a statue of the saint, and commands the saint to watch over his goods, threatening to beat the saint if he fails. When the second Jew's house is robbed, he castigates the saint verbally and physically, intending to break the statue. St. Nicholas appears to the robbers, tells them what he is suffering at the Jew's hands because of their evil actions, and menaces them with hanging and God's wrath. Terrified, the men return the stolen goods, refrain from further stealing, and the Jew becomes Christian.<sup>30</sup>

These two tales of St. Nicholas' interactions with Jewish merchants are a curious mixture of willing veneration, or at least respect, and saintly punishment. In both tales, Christians are the malefactors, although in the second story the Jewish protagonist abuses the statue of the saint, reminiscent of tales of Jewish desecration of Christian holy objects.<sup>31</sup> Yet this Jew, like the first one, is reclaimed for the side of good, from the Christian perspective, and made a permanent part of the St. Nicholas' community of venerators by his conversion to Christianity. Strikingly, in this version of the tales, both Jews actively initiate a miracle from the Christian saint by placing their trust in Nicholas to safeguard their goods against avaricious Christians. St. Nicholas is portrayed, therefore, as drawing

<sup>29</sup> Meisen, *Nikolauskult*, 281–85.

<sup>30</sup> Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea*, 1:44–46, no. 3; Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, 1:25, no. 3.

<sup>31</sup> Rubin, *Gentile Tales*.

the faith of individuals outside the Christian fold and being willing to defend these non-Christians' honourable claims against dishonest members of the community one might expect St. Nicholas to support automatically, namely the Christian one. Instead, St. Nicholas is marked as universal in his defence of righteousness. His heterogeneous patronage is rewarded by Jewish conversion to Christianity. Both characteristics, namely his ability to draw the veneration of non-Christians, in this case Jews, and his unwavering defence of righteousness, even to the point of supporting Jews over Christians, serve to glorify the saint as one to whom *any* person could turn, especially any merchant, regardless of the individual's religious affiliation, as long as his/her claim was just.

Steven Epstein singles out the tales of Jews in the St. Nicholas cycle as unusual relative to the depiction of Jews in the rest of the *Legenda Aurea*. He attributes relatively positive portrayals of Jews in Jacobus' account of St. Nicholas in contrast to the almost universally negative representation of Jews elsewhere in the work to the locus of St. Nicholas in the southern Italian city of Bari, where there was a substantial population of Jews, in contrast to Genoa or the region of Liguria generally, from which Jacobus de Voragine came. According to him, the translation of St. Nicholas' relics from Myra, in Western Asia, inspired tales of miraculous conversions of Jews.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, scholars have noted the general absence of Jews in Genoa and the rest of Liguria, variously from the end of the thirteenth or early fourteenth century up until the mid-fifteenth, when Jews were allowed trade and eventually settle and flourish. Yet Jews were very active in trade and prosperous in Genoese colonies and were likewise active as traders in Lombardy, where Jacobus had also worked.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore Georges Jehel offers a gentle challenge to the assertion that there were no Jews in Genoa during this period, by providing indications of Jewish mercantile activities there prior to the fifteenth century.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear that there was a more substantive Jewish presence and involvement in international trade in southern Italy prior to the fourteenth century; thereafter Jews prospered in a variety of professions, among which were trade and banking in the central and northern Italian states.<sup>35</sup>

The presence of Jews in southern or northern Italy and their economic activities provide important context for understanding Jacobus de Voragine's version of the life of St. Nicholas and his depiction of the saint as attractive to Jews. I suggest that these stories of St. Nicholas' intervention on behalf of Jews against thieving Christians also polemi-

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**32** Epstein, *The Talents of Jacopo da Varagine*, 153–54. On the depiction of Jews elsewhere in Jacobus de Voragine's work see 58–59, 93–94, 183–85.

**33** Urani and Zazzu, eds., *The Jews in Genoa*, 1:xviii–xxvii and especially xxvi; Simonsohn, "International Trade and Italian Jews"; Simonsohn, "La condizione giuridica"; Cassen, *Marking the Jews in Renaissance Italy*, 154–87; Bezzina, "Social Landscapes," esp., 186; Abulafia, "The Italian Other," esp. 234; Maifreda, "The Jews, Institutions, Economy, Society"; Lopez, *Su e giu per la storia Genova*.

**34** Jehel, "Jews and Muslims in Medieval Genoa." Also see Urani and Zazzu, eds., *The Jews in Genoa*, 1:ix–xxvii.

**35** Simonsohn, "International Trade and Italian Jews"; Simonsohn, "La condizione giuridica"; Von Falkenhausen, "Jews in Byzantine Southern Italy," Urani and Zazzu, eds., *The Jews in Genoa*, 1:xviii–lvii; Abulafia, "Jews in Sicily."

cized against dishonesty in mercantile practices. Such a polemic would have certainly resonated in a southern Italian context, in a place such as Bari, where Jews, Christians, and Muslims of various types and communities were engaged in international and local trade, literary and scientific exchanges, and, of course, interacting with one another on a daily basis.<sup>36</sup> Issues of honesty in trade would have, of course, also been vital in Northern Italy, specifically Genoese and Lombard regions in which Jacobus de Voragine was active, since both of these areas were heavily engaged in international trading and banking, although as noted above, a substantial Jewish presence in these regions seems to have come somewhat later.<sup>37</sup> Thus, these incidents in Jacobus' life of St. Nicholas would have served as cautionary tales against dishonest dealings, placing financial probity between merchants, lenders, and householders (it is not clear that the second Jew in the story was a merchant, since his house is robbed, although his concern to have his goods protected suggests that he may have been) above religious affiliation. Given the intersections of religious plurality with trading interests and practices in Bari and elsewhere in southern Italy during this period, the tales of Jews and St. Nicholas reflect the frequent interaction between Jews and Christians in the region and highlight St. Nicholas as a mediator between the two. Within the more immediate northern Italian milieu in which Jacobus de Voragine lived and worked, the tales potentially function to critique dishonest Christians. These are so reprehensible that St. Nicholas favours the Jews over them; such a tale would have served as a shaming technique to urge Christian merchants to behave honestly. Ultimately, however, any religious plurality in the saint's community of adherents is quickly resolved by the Jews' conversion to Christianity. In addition to the mediating or softening effect of having taken the tale from Bari, where interactions between Jews and Christians (and Muslims) were frequent and relatively easy, for Jacobus de Voragine the Jews' conversion also may have served to make them more palatable than some of the other Jewish figures elsewhere in his collection. By including these two tales, Jacobus made St. Nicholas more appealing to his contemporary Italian audience, both southern and northern, while at the same time drawing from older traditions which already marked St. Nicholas as a defender of seafarers and merchants, and one willing to intercede for those outside the Christian community.

Yet there is an additional layer of polemic within this tale. Bari was not merely famous as being the home of St. Nicholas' relics, but also for having one of its archbish-

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**36** Schippers, "Arabic and Hebrew Love Poetry in Sicily"; Colafemmina, "Da Bari uscirà la legge;" Pasquale, *Apurta al dialogo interreligiosa*; Hartman, "A Hebrew Signature in a Latin Manuscript"; Mancuso, "Hebrew Science in Early Medieval South Italy"; Burgaretta, "Annotazioni in ebraico e giudeo-arabo"; Schiano, "Libri nel conflitto"; Grévin, "Le rôle des communautés juives sicilienne"; Toomaspoeg, "Les Allemends, les juifs et les musulmans en Sicilie"; Abulafia, "Jews in Sicily"; Abulafia, *The Two Italies*; Metcalfe, *The Muslims of Medieval Italy*; Bucaria, Luzzati, and Tarantino, eds., *Ebrei e Sicilia*; Gil, "The Jews in Sicily under Muslim Rule"; Von Falkenhausen, "The Jews in Byzantine Southern Italy"; Rotman, "Converts in Byzantine Italy"; Udovich, "Juifs et musulmans en Sicilie"; Bucaria, ed., *Gli ebrei in Sicilia*.

**37** Miner and Stantchev, "The Genoese Economy"; Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, 322–33; Abulafia, *The Two Italies*; Van Doosselaere, *Commercial Agreements*; Bautier, *Commerce méditerranéen*; Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution*.

ops, one Andreas, who was archbishop of Bari from 1062–circa 1066, converts to Judaism, and flees to Muslim-controlled Egypt. His choice was known and remembered well enough to inspire the conversion of another southern Italian Christian, one Johannes, better known by his Jewish name, Obadiah, to convert to Judaism in the early twelfth century and seek sanctuary under Islamic rule.<sup>38</sup> Accepting Epstein's assertion that the original background and origin of these tales was Bari itself, St. Nicholas' success at converting Jews to Christianity presents the saint as a counter to the attraction that Judaism clearly had for some Christians and tells a story of Christian triumph in opposition to local recollection of the embarrassment of having two prominent Christians reject their religion of origin in favour of Judaism.

Conversion to Christianity or death to the obstinate is the almost inevitable conclusion to saintly interactions with Jews or Muslims, although the *Cantigas* of King Alfonso X vary between conversion and veneration without conversion.<sup>39</sup> Either result uses the religious other as "proof" of the greater power and truth of the Christian saint in question, and, by extension, Christianity as a whole. Death or punishment of Muslims or Jews, as in the Christian pilgrimage narratives, demonstrates the saint's ability to force religious outsiders, potentially inimical to the "truth" into a hierarchical obedience and recognition of the saint, and his/her people's (superior) relationship with God. Recognition and even praise of a saint by non-Christians was a special honour for the saint, for it demonstrated the extent of his/her appeal and power. However, as in travel accounts about religious sites and encounters in the Middle East, such veneration and the saint's acceptance of it, created a liminal status for non-Christians as partial members of the saint's circle. Conversion resolved such ambiguity, and in a European context, this end result was untroubled by the reality of non-Christian political and religious power and resistance. Both the *Miracula Sancti Isidori* and Jacobus de Voragine's version of the life of St. Nicholas follow these broad tendencies. Close examination of these hagiographical collections, however, also demonstrates that idiosyncrasies of an individual author's polemical rhetoric and the local realities surrounding their composition and subsequent audience create very specific, potent interpretive contexts.

### **Compelling Rituals: Jewish and Muslim Donations and Participation in Christian Festive Processions in Latin Europe**

In various locales and periods, local Christian customs and regulations enacted by Christian authorities worked together to create shared (sometimes forcibly so) practices or duelling rituals between Christians and the Muslims or Jews living under their rule, or to construct an illusion of such shared rituals. Several stages may be identified.

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**38** Golb, "Autograph Memoirs of Obadiah the Proselyte"; Golb, "Jewish Proselytism"; Praver, "The Autobiography of Obadyah the Norman Convert"; Colafemmina, "La conversion al giudaismo di Andrea arcivescovo di Bari"; Holo, "Jewish Communities and Personalities"; Perani, "Una menzione di Obadiah il Proselito"; Blumenkranz, "La Conversion au Judaisme"; Scheiber, "Fragment of the Chronicle of Obadyah."

**39** Cuffel, "Henceforward."

On the one hand, there are indications that ritual violence against Jews had taken place from the early Middle Ages onwards.<sup>40</sup> However, starting in the twelfth century, more abundant documentation may be found. This material includes descriptions of Jews being required to be the target of symbolic, enacted expressions of subjugation orchestrated by Christians, which Muslims occasionally joined. Such ritualized violence against Jews may be understood as a “shared” practice in so far as Jews are a necessary, albeit unwilling participant in a Christian religious festival. In addition to this forced sharing, later medieval sources also include descriptions of seemingly voluntary Muslim and Jewish participation in Christian rituals. Discussions of Jews and Muslims in various types of Christian holiday celebrations increase for the thirteenth and especially fourteenth centuries as the Corpus Christi processions became part of proscribed Church liturgy.<sup>41</sup> This development takes place at approximately the same time as efforts to codify and organize earlier collections of laws increased, including those about Jews and Muslims specifically, and anxiety about Jews and Muslims mixing indiscriminately with Christians intensified.<sup>42</sup> During the late Middle Ages and early modern period, extremely detailed accounts of royal processions and other kinds of festivals began to be recorded, and while Teofilio Ruiz warns that copious details should not lure readers into assumptions of utter and unbiased veracity, nonetheless such narratives provide vital information regarding the form, function, and participants—including both real and dramatized Jewish and Muslim ones—in public festivals. They further hint at how the Christian authors wished these processions and accompanying entertainments to affect their audiences, while pointing to an overall increase in the number of festive processions during this period.<sup>43</sup> At times these regulations and chronicles reflected very real cross-religious sociability and sharing of religious spaces and practices, or acts of hostility toward the same. However, the depictions of these behaviours, as well as the activities themselves, frequently served to link certain holy days and practices of Christians and non-Christians the better to underscore religious incompatibility between the groups and/or “proper” religious hierarchy, at least in the mind of a given author.

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**40** Roth, “European Jewry in the Dark Ages”; Roth, “The Eastertide Stoning of the Jews.”

**41** Soussen-Max, “La question de violence rituelle”; Nirenberg, “Violencia, memoria, y *convivencia*”; Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 179–80, 198–230; Nirenberg, “Les juifs, la violence et le sacré”; Linder, “The Jews Too Were Not Absent”; Muñoz Fernandez, “Fiestas laicas y fiestas profanas”; Coulet, “De l’intégration à l’exclusion.” Changes in public mourning for kings and entry processions also affected the roles open to Jews and Muslims on these occasions. Lourie, “Jewish Participation in Royal Funerary Rites”; Ruiz, *A King Travels*, 42, 106–7, 273. On the development of the Corpus Christi festival more generally see Rubin, *Corpus Christi*.

**42** Champagne and Resnick, *Jews and Muslims under the Fourth Lateran Council*; Nirenberg, *Neighboring Faiths*; Nirenberg, “Conversion, Sex, and Segregation”; Nirenberg, “Religious and Sexual Boundaries”; Freidenreich, “Muslims in Western Canon Law”; Catlos, *Muslims of Medieval Christendom*, 371–77; Kedar, “De iudeis et sarracenis”; Pakter, *Medieval Canon Law and the Jews*; García y García, “Jews and Muslims in the Canon Law of the Iberian Peninsula”; García y García, “Judíos y moros en el ordenamiento canónico medieval.”

**43** Ruiz, *A King’s Travels*, 8–20, 29, 49–53.

### Legal Background and Considerations

One element around which shared practices had to negotiate, or indeed, was part of the response to shared practices in its own right, was law. Muslim and Christian religious law recognized Jews and other religious minorities as legitimate—though often undesirable—and possessing certain rights. Muslims, when they were subject to Christian rule, were given a position in Christian society with rights and restrictions similar to that given to “protected people” or *dhimmi* in Muslim society.<sup>44</sup> Within Western Europe, Christian canon law from the twelfth century onwards tended to group Muslims together with Jews, much as Sunni law categorized Jews and Christians together as *dhimmis*, subjugated minorities, and those who had received the scripture of God.<sup>45</sup> Often in Western Christian codes, however, the greater perfidy of the Jews in comparison to the Muslims was underscored.<sup>46</sup> Laws regulating interactions between Christians and religious minorities in Byzantium and Western Europe provide evidence of shared practices; however, they are entirely prescriptive, and so will be examined in the last chapter, which analyzes opposition to shared practices in Christian-ruled lands. Forced participation in Christian festivals tended to be mandated by royal or local civil authorities or local custom and thus stand apart from canon law.<sup>47</sup>

### Muslim and Jewish Participation in Christian Public Festivals and Royal Entries

Christian processions and public festivals, such as carnival, constitute a separate category of shared practice between medieval Jews, Christians, and Muslims. As a number of scholars have pointed out, the expectation or custom that non-Christians, specifically Jews, participate in entry celebrations of kings dates at least to Gregory of Tours (538–594 CE), where in his *Historia Francorum*, he describes the entry of Guntram, who was king of Orléans from 561–592 CE:

The day of his entry into Orleans was the feast day of Saint Martin, that is July 4. A vast crowd of citizens came out to meet him, carrying flags and banners and singing songs in his praise. The speech of the Syrians contrasted sharply with that of those using Gallo-Roman and again with that of the Jews, as they each sang his praises in their own tongue. “Long live the King!” they all shouted,

<sup>44</sup> Cohen, *Under Crescent & Cross*, 52–74.

<sup>45</sup> Freidenreich, “Muslims in Eastern Canon Law”; Freidenreich, “Muslims in Western Canon Law”; Freidenreich, “Christians in Early and Classical Sunnī Law.” Freidenreich notes that some Muslim jurists made the distinction between having *dhimmi* status, and being truly people of the book, “*ahl-l-kitāb*”. On the grouping of Jews and Muslims together in Western Canon law, also see Echevarria, “The Marks of the Other”; Kedar, “De iudeis et sarracenis.”

<sup>46</sup> Freidenreich, “Muslims in Western Canon Law.”

<sup>47</sup> Some of these do seem to have the force of church sanction, however, as in the case of Jews’ role in papal processions and coronation rituals. See Linder, “The Jews Too Were Not Absent”; Coulet, “De l’intégration à l’exclusion.” For examples and a discussion of royal and civil mandated participation in festivals see below in this chapter.

“May he continue to reign over his peoples more years than we can count!” The Jews played a full part in these acclamations. “Let all peoples continue to worship you and bow the knee before you and submit to your rule,” they kept shouting.<sup>48</sup>

The large number and mixture of peoples, and the praise of the king in multiple languages all fit what becomes part of the common elements of Jewish, and later, Muslim, participation in royal, and pontifical entries, other types of festivals connected with particular saints, holy days, carnival, and Corpus Christi.<sup>49</sup> What is not always clear is whether Jewish or Muslim participation in Christian celebrations was voluntary. Christian authors frequently depict the presence of Jews and/or Muslims as one aspect of a general outpouring of joy by the population as a whole, as for example in the description of the reception which Alfonso II received upon entering the city of Toledo in 1139:

When the whole populace heard that the emperor was coming to Toledo, all the leaders of the Christians, Saracens and Jews and all the common people of the city moved out along the way to the city and with tympanums and zithers and psalms and every type of music. And each one of them according to his language praising and glorifying God, who was making every act of the emperor prosper, and also saying: “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”<sup>50</sup>

As in the passage from Gregory, there is no suggestion here that the Jews or Muslims were pressured into attending despite the fact that Alfonso was returning after having

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**48** “Sed cum ad urbem Aurelianensem venisset, erat die sollempnitatis beati Martini, id est quarto nonas mensis quinti. Processitque in obviam ejus immensa populi turba cum signis atque vexillis, canentes laudes. Et hinc lingua Syrorum, hinc Latinorum, hinc etiam ipsorum Judaeorum, in diversis laudibus varie concrepabat, dicens: ‘Vivat rex; renunquique ejus in diversis populis annis innumeris dilatur’. Judaei vero, qui in his laudibus videbantur esse participes, dicebant: ‘Omnes gentes te adorent, tibi que genu flectant atque tibi sint subditae’”; Gregory of Tours, *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Francorum*, vol. 2, bk. 8, chap. 1; Gregory, *History of the Franks*, bk. 8, chap. 1; Linder, “The Jews Too Were Not Absent”; Coulet, “De l’intégration à l’exclusion.”

**49** Participation in Corpus Christi was a contested issue, however, often couched in violence, as a number of scholars have demonstrated. For this, and Jews, Christians, and other types of participants in Christian processions generally, see Champagne and Boustan, “Walking in the Shadows of the Past”; Catlos, *Muslims of Medieval Christendom*, 271, 365, 437–38, 482; Nirenberg, *Neighboring Faiths*, 77–81, 110; Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 180–82, 200–230; Nirenberg, “Les juifs, la violence et le sacré”; Linder, “The Jews Too Were Not Absent”; Ruiz, *Spanish Society, 1348–1700*, 139–41, 146–75, 224; Ruiz, *A King Travels*, 37–48, 82–83, 104–7, 184–85, 249–92; Soussen-Max, “Violence rituelle ou émotion populaire?”; Soussen-Max, “La question de violence rituelle”; Muñoz Fernandez, “Fiestas laicas y fiestas profanas”; Coulet, “De l’intégration à l’exclusion”; Balbás, *Algunos aspectos*, 71–72, 80.

**50** “Cum omnis populus audisset quod imperator veniret Toletum, omnes principes christianorum et sarrenorum et iudaeorum et tota plebs civitatis longe a civitate exierunt obviam et cum tipanis et citharis et psalteries et omni genere musicorum. Unusquisque eorum secundam linguam suam laudantes et florificantes Deum, qui prosperabat omnes actus imperatoris, necnon et dicentes: Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini”; Sanchez Balda, *Chronica Adelfonsi Imperatoris*, para. 157, pp. 121–22.

defeated the Almoravids who had taken the castle at Oreja. As Champagne and Boustan have pointed out in their discussion of Jewish participation in Papal entries and coronations during the twelfth century, Jews had much to gain by joining such processions. By so doing, Roman Jews, for example, participated “in a civic/liturgical ritual that acknowledged their acceptance of the ruling authority and maintained their roles as legitimate members of the civic community.”<sup>51</sup> The same observation also holds true of Muslims welcoming any ruler, whether papal or royal.<sup>52</sup> In the example of the Toledo procession cited above, the joyful reception of King Alfonso by Muslims, in particular, for a Christian audience, would have affirmed Christian victory and restoration of proper religious hierarchy of Christian power over Muslims (and Jews), and the acceptance on the part of both of these groups of that hierarchy. For the Muslims, assuming the account is accurate, joining the celebration signalled their loyalty and confirmed membership to the wider society within the king’s lands. Indeed, that Jews and Muslims understood that their place within such entry processions both marked and assured them a place within the civic communal hierarchy may be seen in a series of disputes between Muslim and Jewish communities in Huesca which King John I of Aragon, who reigned from 1387 to 1396, had to settle. The argument was over which of the two (Jews or Muslims) should take precedence in public processions, such as royal funerals, entries or celebrations of births, a point about which the two communities had come to blows. Seemingly the king himself had difficulty deciding the matter.<sup>53</sup> What these disputes show, however, is that Jews and Muslims *desired* to take part in these processions and were a conscious, willing part of the symbolic system that these processions embodied, at least in this instance.

This was not always the case, however. Conquered Muslims were compelled to participate in victory processions under humiliating conditions. For example, when Ferdinand of Antequerra (1380–1416), the future king of Aragon, entered Seville after a successful battle, seventeen captured Muslims were required to trail behind him, their banners dragging in the mud, as the king with archbishops and other clerics proceeded, cross held high, “with very a solemn procession, saying the ‘Te Deum laudamus’ and songs of joy.”<sup>54</sup> The muddied banners and following the king emphasized the Muslims’ political humiliation, even as these elements symbolically enhanced the king’s status. As in the Toledo procession, the Muslims’ presence and activity within the entry festival signalled the “rightful” hierarchy, from a Christian perspective, of Christian over Muslim.

**51** Champagne and Boustan, “Walking in the Shadows of the Past.” Citation on 492.

**52** Compare with Coulet, “De l’integration à l’exclusion.”

**53** ACA: C reg. 1890 52r–53r and ACA: C reg. 1903 52v–53r. The first of these may be found transcribed in Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 181n61. The second may be found in Basáñez Villaluenga, *La aljama sarracena de Huesca*, 231, doc. 92. Also see their discussion of this exchange and similar events: Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 180–82; Basáñez Villaluenga, *La aljama sarracena de Huesca*, 77–78.

**54** “con muy solene procesión diziendo el Te Deum laudamus e cantos de alegría”; Mata Carriazo, ed., *Crónica de Juan II de Castilla*, 399–400, quote on 400. See analysis by Ruiz, *A King Travels*, 81–83, and Cuffel, “Seductive Sounds.” Compare with Devany, *Enemies in the Plaza*, 165–67.

One may argue that joining a predominantly political, civic celebration does not constitute a shared religious festival between Jews, Christians, and Muslims; yet to do so would be to fail to consider the multilayered meanings of these events. Already in the three passages cited in this section, one from the sixth century regarding Guntram, the second describing Alfonso II's entry into Toledo, and the final one regarding the Infante Ferdinand, religious elements are clearly present in the kinds of praise the participants chant. Amnon Linder has provided a detailed analysis of the section from Gregory of Tours, noting that the king's entry took place on St. Martin's day, which would make the procession part of a mass. He further argues that the subsequent displeasure of Gregory, as the author, and of King Guntram in the text, was tied to conflicting Jewish and Christian interpretations of Genesis 27:29. Linder suggests the Jews' evocation was based upon this verse in combination with a passage from the *Aleinu* prayer, part of the daily liturgy of the Jews, which eventually came to be expanded and understood in polemical ways against Christians.<sup>55</sup> Champagne and Boustan have challenged this interpretation, and warned against reading "backwards" into the past, namely, assessing hostile meanings in early texts based on later developments.<sup>56</sup> In either case, the passage itself clearly represents the people, including the Jews, as evoking God on behalf of the king. Indeed, the praise which Gregory of Tours placed in the mouth of Jews is peculiar for it seems draw a parallel between God and King Guntram by suggesting that all people should revere him, in addition to bowing to him. The same peculiar parallel is apparent in the twelfth-century text. "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord", one of the cries which greeted Alfonso II, with slight variations, is the cry that greeted Jesus' entry into Jerusalem according to all four of the canonical gospels.<sup>57</sup> The passage may also be found in Psalms, however, given the degree of interaction between Jews, Christians, and Muslims, and the centrality of the phrase in the Christian version of the life of Jesus, it seems unlikely that the Jews and Muslims in the crowd would have failed to recognize its import and the link being drawn between the king and Jesus.<sup>58</sup> Even allowing for differing scriptural referents and interpretations, being part of a royal procession involved evoking God in some way on behalf of the ruler. In Ferdinand's procession into Seville, Muslims do not sing the religious praises themselves, but are, nonetheless, required to listen to them, surrounded by Christian clerics, and led by a crucifix. Such a context pointed to their *religious*, as well as political humiliation, while at the same time, marking them as now part of the community of the king and his clerics. Having Jews and/or Muslims praise/pray for the king in these Western European texts is a much more public and communal version of the custom in the Middle East for *dhimmi* communities to pray for the Muslim leader.<sup>59</sup> Rhetorically, these and similar passages very much

**55** Linder, "The Jews Too Were Not Absent," esp. 327–31.

**56** Champagne and Boustan, "Walking in the Shadows of the Past."

**57** Matthew 21:9, Mark 11:9, Luke 13:35, and John 12:13.

**58** In the Vulgate, the passage is from Psalms 117:26. In most translations, however, it is 118:26.

**59** Goitein, "Prayers from the Geniza." Such prayers seem to have become standardized in Europe and the Ottoman during the early modern period. See Schwartz, "Hanoten Teshua."

fit into the concept of other as witness to the truth, in this case, the truth of the king's reign, and the idea of God's blessing on the ruler in question. The insistence that all types of people welcome the king affirms and enhances the king's power, for it shows that not only all the members of the urban, Christian community support the king, from the lowest "*plebs*" to the highest "*principes*," but also those outside of the Christian community. In the case of the passage from Gregory's *Historia*, the king's religious power in addition to his political appeal is enhanced because Jews come together with Christians to praise him on a Christian holy day, and do so even though, in the end, King Guntram does not acquiesce to the Jews' requests. The issue of unification of opposing religious and political power is much more pointed in the instance of Alfonso's entry however, for it follows an extended, difficult battle with the southern, Muslim king and his forces, in which Alfonso was ultimately victorious. Thus, having the local Muslims, especially, praise and welcome the king, presents him as accepted and beloved even by those who might otherwise oppose him, much like European Christian and Jewish writers of pilgrimage narratives depicted their holy dead as the object of veneration by members of other religious communities.

### Processing Holy Books: Display of Torah and Qur'an in Royal and Papal Entry Processions and Christian Saints' Days

While the religious element is not particularly prominent in the passages discussed so far, in other instances it is more explicit. If the fact that the procession described by Gregory of Tours took place on St. Martin's day hints at the religious nature of the occasion, indications that Jews were required to present the Torah at churches on specific Christian saints' days from the fifteenth century in southern Italy leaves no room for doubt. There, in a number of towns, Jews were required to bring the Torah to a church in honour of St. Stephen. That the Jews were expected to honour the Christian saint is clear in the wording of one of the regulations:

That all and every Jew remaining in this land Marsalia is held to approach in any year on the feast of the proto-martyr Saint Stephen the church of the blessed Apostle Thomas as the mother church of the land in order to give reverence to the aforementioned St. Stephen, entering with their Torah.<sup>60</sup>

Even when Jewish communities managed to gain royal permission to eschew such festivities, local authorities seem to have continued to pressure them to do so.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>60</sup> "Quod universi et singuli Judei in eadem terra Marsalia degentes quolibet anno in festi sancti Stephani protomartiris ad ecclesiam beati Thome apostoli tanquam matricem ecclesiam ejus terre ad debitum reverencie sancti Stephani predicti cum eorum theora intus et in eadam ecclesia accedere teneantur. Laguamina and Laguamina"; *Codice diplomatico dei Guidi di Sicilia*, vol 1, p. 274 no. 208; Simonsen, "Le Pourim de Saragosse"; Linder, "The Jews Too Were Not Absent"; Simonsohn, ed., *Jews of Sicily*, 3:1522–24, no. 1592, from Palermo Archivio di Stato R. Cancelleria, reg. 17, c. 27r–v, pp. 1668–69 no. 1737 from Palermo Archivio di Stato R. Cancelleria, reg. 43 c. 138v.

<sup>61</sup> Simonsohn, ed., *Jews of Sicily*, 3:1665, no. 1734, from Palermo Archivio di Stato R. Cancelleria,

The choice of St. Stephen was particularly symbolic from the Christian perspective, in that Stephen was depicted as having been martyred by angry members of the Jewish leadership in Acts 7:54–59. Requiring Jews to pay homage to this particular saint was tantamount to requiring them to do penance for his death and thus admit the guilt and failure of their ancestors in killing him and not recognizing the truth of his message. These implications would be in addition to the basic compulsion to join Christians in their veneration of this figure.<sup>62</sup>

Likewise, accounts of royal processions frequently incorporated religious elements. For example, Bartholomaeus of Neocastro (ca. 1240–post 1293 CE), an Italian jurist and author of the chronicle, *Historia Sicula*, described the entry of King Pedro of Aragon to Messina and the ritualized reception he received by the crowds, including the Jews, in 1282:

he entered the city, they applauded with the agreeable voices of men and women; they opened the law of the Jews of the Synagogue; the sacred fathers went before the gaze of the king and the clerical order of the poor followed. The king alone went forth in the middle on horseback.<sup>63</sup>

The added element of bringing the Torah scroll before a king or other type of leader and opening it, presumably for (symbolic) inspection, brought one of the central religious objects of the Jews directly into the Christian processional rituals. In the midst of this parade of Christian clerics, bringing out the Torah very much emphasized the Jews' religious difference, yet also surrounded it by Christian people, songs, and visual signs. Presenting the Torah to the king also indicated subservience, at least to Christian viewers.<sup>64</sup> Yet more than merely being present or singing biblical passages in praise of the king, the use of the Torah made the Jews' obeisance religious in nature and extremely public. These observations hold equally true when Muslims brought the Qur'an to promenade before rulers and their entourages, as in the case of the entry of the Princess Blanca, daughter of the King of Navarre into Briviesca in 1440:

The Princess continued on her way to Briviesca where the festivities were arranged, and there she was given a very solemn reception by everyone in the town, with each trade taking out its banner and its entertainments as best they could with great dances, and great joy and happiness, and then the Jews came with the Torah, and the Moors with the Alcoran in that form which is customary for the kings who had recently come to reign in this area, and there came many

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reg. 43, c. 79v: King Martin instructs local authorities to respect the privilege allowing the Jews of Marsala to refuse to listen to and attend the festivities of St. Stephen.

**62** Part of the point of this particular dictum was also to require Jews to listen to sermons in the church. *Codice diplomatica dei Guidei di Sicilia*, vol 1, p. 274, no. 208.

**63** "civitatem ingreditur, jocundis applaudunt vocibus mares et foeminae; judaeorum synagoge legem aperiunt; ante conspectum regis praeibant sacri patres; et ordinatus clerus subsequitur parulorum; solus Rex eques medius vehtur"; Bartholomaeus de Neocastro, *Historia Sicula*, chap. 53, in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. 13, p. 1066.

**64** Linder, "The Jews Too Were Not Absent"; Coulet, "De l'integration à l'exclusion."

trumpets and there came many trumpets and loud drums and kettle drums which made such a great noise, that it seemed as if a very [great] host were coming.<sup>65</sup>

Here the Jews and Muslims' presentation of their holy books is part of festive pageantry, and is described amid other activities of celebrations, such as dancing, or the parading of banners by various tradesmen groups. Furthermore, there is no indication of their being compelled to join. Yet the mention of the Jews and Muslims' behaviour as part of the custom for kings who had recently come to rule in a given area, hints that the display of the holy books was not done merely for entertainment's sake, but rather as a form of recognition of a new ruler. The reference to the noise being reminiscent of that of a great army lauds the extent of the celebration but also connects the events to military might and political power; indeed, the passage goes on to describe war games which were included as part of the four-day celebration.<sup>66</sup> As discussed above regarding other forms of Jewish (and Muslim) inclusion in public festivals, their presence emphasized that part of the rulers' power was lordship over non-Christian communities. The raising of the Torah and the Qur'an underscored their religious difference as one of the elements which enhanced a given Christian leader's power.

Exhibiting the Torah, indeed even opening the scroll became a common element in Jews' participation not only in royal entries, but papal ones as well.<sup>67</sup> By the twelfth century some authors treat the displays of Jewish law or banners as a normal part of the celebrations, though still significant enough to merit special notice.<sup>68</sup> Even more than the royal entries, as Linder has noted, the ritual encounter between popes and Jews was a form of scripted, public subservience. Participating Jews were required to request approval of their law, which the pope would accord them, while publicly stating his rejection of the Jews' rituals and messianic expectations.<sup>69</sup> Some of these formulations were milder than others. One of the first recorded is by the French abbot, Suger

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**65** "Princesa continiáron su camino para Briviesca donde estaban las fiestas aparejadas, é allí les fué hecho muy solemne recebiemiento por todos de la villa, sacando cada oficio su pendon é su entremes lo mejor que pudiéron con grandes danzas, é muy gran gozo y alegría é despues destros venian los judios con la Tora, é los Moros con el Alcoran en aquella forma que se suele hacer a los Reyes que nuevamente vianan á reynar en parte estaña allí venian muchos trompetas e menstriles altos e tamborinos y atabales los quales hacian tan gran ruido, que parecia venir una muy huesta"; Guzman, *Crónica del Señor Rey Juan Segunda*, 408; Ruiz, *A King Travels*, 42, 106–7, 273.

**66** Guzman, *Crónica del Señor Rey Juan Segunda*, 409. On the connection between the music of festivals and that of war in medieval Iberia see Cuffel, "Seductive Sounds." On music and other entertainments, including military during royal processions and festivals in Iberia see Ruiz, *A King Travels*, 38–44, 82, 92, 101–12, 120, 127–31, 139, 141–42, 145, 156–57, 161–64, 169, 172, 193–245, 253–54, 261–63.

**67** Linder, "The Jews Too Were Not Absent"; Ruiz, *A King Travels*, 42, 106–107; Coulet, "De l'integration à l'exclusion."

**68** Boso, *La vie des Papes*, chaps. 168 (for Pope Eugenius III (ca. 1080–1153 CE, Papal reign 1145–1153 CE) and 171 (for Pope Alexander III (ca. 1100/1105–1181 CE, Papal reign 1159–1181 CE), pp. 387 and 413 respectively. Linder, "The Jews Too Were Not Absent."

**69** Linder, "The Jews Too Were Not Absent."

(ca. 1081–1151 CE), describing King Louis le Gros' reception of Pope Innocent II and the procession to celebrate the Easter Mass at the church of St. Denis amid lavish decoration of humans and horses alike, music, and the tossing of coins to the crowd. Suger then remarks:

When, however, an assembly of knights and many people received him with great honour, even that synagogue of the Jews of Paris made blind, which, offering him a roll of the letter of the law, [which] as you know, [is] veiled, obtained from his mouth a supplication of mercy and piety, 'May the All Powerful God remove the veil from your hearts.'<sup>70</sup>

Others were far more harshly humiliating. For example, the fifteenth-century papal legate, Agostino Patrizi Piccolomini records the papal response to the Jews' presentation of their law in far more elaborate and triumphalist terms:

Hebrew men, the Holy Law we praise and venerate in as much that it was given through the hand of Moses to your fathers by the All Powerful God. Your observance, however, and vain interpretation of the law we damn and reproach, because the saviour whom you still expect in vain, the apostolic faith teaches and preaches however, he has already come, our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father, and Holy Spirit lives and reigns, God forever.<sup>71</sup>

The ritualized encounter between the pope and Jews resembles Jewish and Muslim celebratory presentations before Christian rulers, but in the context of the meaning of shared festivals, differs in certain significant elements. While passages in which Jews and Muslims partake of royal processions may be argued to have elements of compulsion and symbolic submission, they also mark the Jews and Muslims as very much part of the diverse community over whom the king or queen rules.<sup>72</sup> In these festivals, the religious other is never excluded or rejected because they are part of the proclamation of royal (Christian) power. The papal ceremonies are more ambiguous, however. On the one hand, Jews are an integral, even necessary, part of papal inauguration. As in the encounters between kings and Jews, members of non-Christian communities are part of the wider populace acclaiming, and thereby legitimizing the leader. In the non-papal processions, part of the importance or power which Jews or Muslims lend to those in

**70** "Cum autem et militia cunei et populi multi concursus ei honoratissime occurreret, nec etiam ipsa Iudaeorum Parisensium execrata defuit synagoga que legis litteram rotulam scilicet velatam oferens, ab ore eius hanc misericordie et pietatis obtinet supplicationem: 'Auferat Deus Omnipotens velamen a cordibus vestris'; Suger, *Vie de Louis le Gros*, chap. 32, p. 120; Linder, "The Jews Too Were Not Absent," esp. 337–38.

**71** "Sanctam legem, Viri Hebraei, et laudamus et veneramus, utpote que ab omnipotenti Deo per manus Moysi patribus vestris tradita est. Observantiam ver vestram, et vanam legis interpretationem damnamus atque improbamus, quia salvatorem quem adhuc frustra expectatis, apostolica fides iam predem advenisse docet et predicat Dominum Nostrum Iesum Christum, qui cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivit et regnat Deus in secula seculorum"; Patrizi, *Rituum ecclesiasticorum*, Liber Primus, Sectio Secunda, 28; Linder, "The Jews Too Were Not Absent," esp. 232.

**72** Coulet, "De l'integration à l'exclusion."

whose honour the procession is held, is their difference; they are part of a wide array of people who represent various professions, economic strata, ages, gender, and, finally religions, and as such represent the extent and depth of the king or queen's popularity and recognition. Indeed, on one occasion when Muslims are present before Pope Alexander III (r. 1159–1181 CE), their ruler's respectful approach toward the Pope is a sign of the Pope's/God's universal rule, for upon seeing this exchange the chronicler notes: "all who were within the sight of this pope, marvelled greatly and said to one another that prophecy, 'And all the kings of the earth adored him, and all the nations served him.'"<sup>73</sup> The meaning here is similar to that of royal processions, where Muslim and Jewish otherness enhance the status of the ruler, though in this case, the recognition by the religious other is given theological import, and seen as fulfilling a prophecy that all nations should serve the Christian God or his representative (the text is not precisely clear to whom the people were attributing the passage in Psalms). In the papal ceremonies, however, it is the Jews as Jews, a very specific religious other, who are necessary. They are required to participate, but their participation is constituted by a formal, public declaration of their non-belonging: their rejection by God in favour of the Christians. The truth of their Torah is affirmed, and permission for their continued existence granted, but at the price of being publicly castigated as religious failures before the assembled Christian community. Jews as religious other are witnesses to Christian truth according to these Christian texts and rituals, because they represent *untruth*. In the twelfth-century example cited, the hope is expressed that the Jews may become part of the community of "truth." By the late Middle Ages, this sentiment had largely disappeared in favour of underscoring Jews' rejection by God. Indeed, in the early sixteenth-century ritualized exchange between the Jews and Pope Julius II (r. 1503–1513 CE), even the avowal of the Torah is called into question, as Julius allowed it to fall to the ground and walked away during the ceremony.<sup>74</sup>

### **Acts of Interpretation and Resistance: Jewish Response to Procession of the Torah in Christian Ceremonies**

Jewish interpretations of the ritual display of the Torah varied. The author of the thirteenth-century Iberian *Sefer ha-Ḥinukh* (The Book of Education), a work which explains the 613 commandments of the Torah and local customs relating to them, casts the presentation of the Torah to kings in a rather negative light. At the end of a lengthy discussion of how and when to carry or approach the ark of the covenant and who was authorized to do so, the author explains:

This commandment is conducted in the time that Israel was on its land, for then they (the Israelites) were required to carry the ark of the covenant of

<sup>73</sup> "universi illi aderant in conspectu eiusdem pontifices, valde mirabantur et dicebant ad invicem illud propheticum verbum: *Et adorabunt eum omnes reges tere, omnes gentes serient ei*"; Boso, *La vie des Papes*, chapter 171, p. 404. The biblical citation comes from Psalm 71:11. In verse 10 the kings of Arabia and Saba are mentioned.

<sup>74</sup> Linder, "The Jews Too Were Not Absent," esp. 362.

God because of war or when their king commanded, but now, because of our sins, we have no king and no ark to carry anywhere. And this commandment is charged to the tribe of Levi and to the rest of Israel that they agree together. And [it is] this, that today they were accustomed to bring out the book of the Torah in the open to be read by the kings of the nations, this is not required in this commandment at all, that all the children of Israel are authorized to carry it, and if, as a way of honouring the Torah, even today they choose those who carry it from among the sons of Levi, it will be a blessing upon them.<sup>75</sup>

The custom of presenting the Torah to non-Jewish kings, according to this author, reflects Jews' current lack of sovereignty or Temple, which in turn is a result of their sinfulness. The public carrying and parading of the Torah by Jews who were neither Levites nor priests likewise is a breach of the original law, which had been followed when Jews lived in their homeland. Thus, the "shared" nature of the ritual is a result of misfortune and punishment, and is a deviation from the ideal. The writer ends with a positive note of blessing for those who try to follow the regulations; however, overall, this author's assessment of the custom and the status of the Jews parallels that expressed by Christians both in the written description of and the actual ritual of presenting the Torah to popes and kings, namely that it is a sign of subjugation.

By contrast, Josef ibn Kaspi (1280–1345), a prolific Jewish author originally from Provence, in his *Shulhan kesef* (Table of Silver), presented Christian leaders as *obligated* to venerate the Torah scroll. In a presumably imaginary dialogue between himself and "an honoured bishop from our land, Provence" (הגמון נכבד מארצנו פרובנצא), the bishop asks him:

Why do you seek from the kings, popes, and bishops that they do honour and reverence to the book of the Torah of Moses in your bringing it out before you in their entry into the city, when we also will bring out our images to them? For what reason are we obligated [*mehuyavim*] to do honour to the book of the Torah of Moses in your hands?<sup>76</sup>

The bishop goes on to argue that one should also honour the other books of the bible, such as the prophets, and that "if our king and our great ones desire that the book of the Torah of Moses or the entire scripture be brought to them, we will bring them out,

75 ונוהגת מצוה זו בזמן שישאל על אדמתן כי זה היו צריכין לשאת ארון ברית יי מפני מלחמה או כאשר יצוה מלכם, אבל עכשיו בעוונותינו אין לנו מלך ולא ארון לשאת בשום מקום. ומצוה זו מוטלת על שבת לוי ועל שאר ישראל שיסכימו על ידם. וזה שנהגו בגליות היום להוציא ספר תורה לקראת מלכי האומות איל זה בחיוב מצוה זו כלל, שכל בני ישראל רשאים לישא אותו, וזאת מדרך כבוד התורה יבחרו גם היום שישאוהו מבני לוי תבוא עליהם ברכה *Sefer ha-Hinukh*, paragraph 368, p. 470. The authorship of this text is disputed. Some have attributed it to Aaron ha-Levi of Barcelona (1235–1290) whereas Israel Ta-Shema suggested that it was the work of his brother, Pinchas. See Ta-Shema, "The True Author of *Sefer ha-Hinukh*."

76 מדוע תבקשו אתם מן המלכים והאפיפיורים והגמונים שיעשו כבוד והדור לספר תורת משה בהוציאכם אותו לפניכם בהכנסם לביעיר, כאשר נוציא גם אנחנו להם צלמינו? ומאי-זה טעם מחיובים אנו לעשות כבוד לספר תורת משה שבידכם *Joseph ibn Kaspi, Shulhan kesef*, chap. 3, 58.

for these books of ours are like yours.”<sup>77</sup> According to the bishop, the fact that the Jews’ scripture is in Hebrew, and the Christians’ in Latin (*rumi*) does not matter because the intent of the two versions is the same.

In this chapter, Kaspi has neatly reversed the roles of deference and obligation present in most (Christian) descriptions of the presentation of the Torah during royal or papal processions. Kaspi’s choice of the term “*meḥuyavim*”, which he places in the bishop’s mouth in various forms throughout the passage, indicates obligation, or compulsion, suggesting that the Christians have no choice except to pay homage to the Hebrew Torah when it is presented by the Jews. Furthermore, the Jews themselves request that the kings and religious leaders of the Christians publicly venerate the Torah at the same time that Christians bring out their “images” (*ẓelamim*). The term may refer to images of saints, i.e. icons, as Linder suggested, but also, potentially, to the banners which Christian chroniclers describe various professional groups as displaying before the king in processions.<sup>78</sup> What is relevant to understanding Kaspi’s interpretation of this ritual in which both Christians and Jews are integral components is that unlike either Christian depictions or that in *Sefer ha-Ḥinukh*, the choice belongs to the Jews, *not* the Christians—Jews seek and Christians are compelled—and it is not the Jews who pay homage to the king or religious leaders of the Christians, but rather, the leaders of the Christians revere the Torah which is in the hands of the Jews. By having a Christian bishop, whom Kaspi describes as esteemed or “honoured” (*nikhbad*), recognize that Jews seek and are granted that kings, popes, and bishops pay deference to the Torah, and that the Christians are required to do so, Kaspi adds the authority of a high-ranking, well-respected member of the religious other, in this case a Christian, to his interpretation of power and choice in these processions. The bishop must argue his case to Kaspi, namely that Christians should present their version of the bible, not that of the Jews. By having the bishop plead his case to the Jewish author, the passage suggests that the capacity to dictate the requirements of the ritual is in the hands of the Jews, not the bishop, an esteemed and powerful leader of the Christian community, who, in his role as bishop, presumably would have also been among those leaders “required” to openly revere the Torah which the Jews brought forth during processions. Furthermore, the argument that Christians should present *their* bible before the king, because it is *like*—not better than—that of the Jews, depicts the Christian bishop as desiring something the Jews have that the Christians do not, namely the right to present their Torah to the king or pope for reverence, and as using Jewish scripture as the measure by which to evaluate the Christian bible. In his response to the bishop’s argumentation, Kaspi makes the religious superiority of Jews and Jewish scripture in the ritual very clear. After systematically refuting the bishop’s claims either that a translation was on a par with the original Hebrew text, or that the intent of the Christian translation and the Hebrew original were the same, Kaspi states emphatically:

**77** וראם מלכנו וגדולינו הפצים שיוצא להם ספר תורת משה או המקרא כולו, אנחנו נוציאם, כי הספרים ההם לנו כמוכם Joseph ibn Kaspi, *Shulḥan kesef*, chap. 3, 58–59

**78** Linder, “The Jews Too Were Not Absent,” 336.

If so, the book of the Torah of Moses which is copied in another language and in another order of writing, it is not under any circumstances the book which God gave to him, furthermore its meaning is not like his meaning. And all the nations admit that our Torah is from heaven.<sup>79</sup>

With this remark, Kaspi simultaneously denies that the Christian bible has any validity, while evoking the recognition by all other non-Jewish peoples that the Hebrew Torah comes from heaven. Those “other nations” include the Christians themselves, so that the Christians are recruited as witnesses to the truth of Judaism, while at the same time being given no positive status of their own.

This tactic differs from that of western Jewish and Christian travellers to the Middle East. As we have seen, these narratives frequently created a hierarchy of belonging, with the author’s community at the pinnacle of chosen status. Members of other religious communities, usually Muslims, who attended rituals or holy sites, which a given author considered “his,” were accorded a kind of secondary belonging, which served to enhance the power and honour of a given holy person, site, or celebration, and demonstrate the truth of the author’s own religion. In Kaspi’s text, the religious other, in this case, Christians, *do* serve to validate the truth and primacy of Judaism, through its Torah, but without any praise, validation or “secondary” belonging granted to them. Kaspi’s approach is closer to the Christian portrayals of Jewish participation in processions and displaying the Torah for approval; though in this instance it is the Christians, not the Jews, who waiver between inclusion and rejection. However, for Kaspi, the Christians do not even have the benefit of having once been the chosen of God and then later rejected; they are simply wrong. That they pay deference to the Torah is only fitting, and places them at the same level as other nations of the world, but without any special status.

During the early modern period and into the modern eras, Jews sought and told tales of a variety of resistance tactics, all of which were carefully hidden from the Christians who imposed Jewish participation in Christian entry ceremonies, whether royal or papal. Amnon Linder emphasizes Jews’ subtle expressions of resistance in his careful and extensive examination of the scriptural context of the verses that Jews chose for the banners they created for papal processions. He demonstrates that on the surface, they resemble those of the Christians and appear laudatory, but that in fact they regularly implied a condemnation of the pope and Christian claims.<sup>80</sup> Jews also rejoiced in tales in which Christian rulers and those who wished the Jewish community harm were outsmarted. The popular tale of the so-called Purim of Syracuse, in which Jews presented an empty Torah holder to the king, and must be miraculously rescued by the Prophet Elijah, when the king demands to look inside, is a fine example of this tendency.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> אם כן, ספר תורת משה המועתק אל לשון אחרת וסדר כתיבה אחרת אינו בשום פנים הספר שנתן האל לו, אחר שכורתו אינו  
; Joseph ibn Kaspi, *Shulḥan Kesef*, chap. 3, 59–60. וכל האומות מודים שתורתנו מן שמים בככותנו.

<sup>80</sup> Linder, “The Jews Too Were Not Absent.”

<sup>81</sup> Simonsen, “Le Pourim de Saragosse”; Linder, “The Jews Too Were Not Absent”; Simonsen, *Between Scylla and Charybdis*, 389; Horowitz, *Reckless Rites*, 279–86. This story must be approached with caution as evidence for medieval attitudes, however. As Horowitz points out, the manuscript

## Jewish and Muslim Obligatory Donations to Christian Institutions

The impulse to require religious minorities to participate in Christian institutions, celebrations rituals and/or drama, or to create the illusion of such participation, occurred in several spheres, of which royal and papal processions were but one. At times these requirements, such as paying certain taxes or tithes, seem to be primarily practical.<sup>82</sup> While not denying the economic benefit that Christian authorities and institutions derived from such fees, the presentation of Muslim and Jewish involvement is rather more mixed. For example, one distinctly less-than-consensual shared “participation” was the stipulation that Muslims and Jews had to donate to Christian religious establishments.<sup>83</sup> Such regulations were often tied to taxes, or rather, to avoiding losing revenue when Christian property passed into Muslim or Christian hands, as in the case of the decree of the Council of Valladolid in 1228.<sup>84</sup> At other times, the wording of the regulation takes on the tone of a religious donation:

We command furthermore, that each year on the Feast of the Resurrection, the Jews, for each family, shall pay six dinari of Melgoriensian money as an offering [*pro oblationibus*] to the parish churches.<sup>85</sup>

“*Oblatio*” meant giving or donation, but it was primarily associated with the idea of religious giving or sacrifice. With such wording, plus the requirement to make the payment on a Christian holiday, this “command” gives the impression that Jews are both participating in the holiday and supporting the church, an impression Jews were unlikely to have relished.<sup>86</sup> At the same time, however, Christian lawmakers in the West also sought to prevent Jewish money from being placed in Churches. Such deposits were made for safe-keeping, as loans, or as a way to avoid the detection of charging interest, and seemingly to make it appear that a given Christian had donated his own money. Whether some of these payments were gifts or bribes by Jews to Christian clergy or churches is

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evidence for this tale raises the possibility that it is a post-medieval invention—the earliest version we have is from the eighteenth century—although it is also possible that only late copies have survived. See his discussion 281n7.

**82** Echevarria, *The City of Three Mosques*, 45–68.

**83** Grazyel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 1:318–21, 332/333, 326/327, 332/333; Baer, *Juden im christlichen Spanien*, 2:53, 61–62, 74, 203

**84** Grazyel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 1:318–21; Baer, *Juden im christlichen Spanien*, 2:53, 61–62, 203; Almagro Vidal, “Military Orders”; Echevarria, *The City of Three Mosques*, 45–46; Echevarria, “*Esclavos musulmanes*.”

**85** “Statuimus insuper, ut Judei singulis annis in festo Dominice resurrectionis sex denarius Melgoriensis monete, pro singulis familiis, pro oblationibus, ecclesie parochiali persolvant”; Grazyel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 1:332/333. This law is from the Council of the Province of Beziers, April 19, 1246.

**86** Calendars, including times for payment, were often marked by Christian feast days, so much so, that Jews kept track of Christian holidays, in part for business purposes, at least in the early modern period. Carlebach, *Palaces of Time*, 115–59.

not entirely clear.<sup>87</sup> Such prohibitions seem at odds with demands that Jews and Muslims pay Christian religious establishments or for churches, yet as Clara Almagro Vidal has demonstrated, as Christians, including Christian religious orders, found themselves having to govern Muslim and Jewish communities, accepting money from them was a necessity, even as Christian and non-Christian subjects came and worked together to negotiate their financial status and rights with Christian authorities.<sup>88</sup> The seeming contradiction between different sorts of laws regarding money by Muslims and Jews to Christian institutions and clergy reflects tension or ambiguities regarding the status of non-Christians, although attitudes and regulations certainly varied from region to region. This kind of “forced donation” from Muslims and Jews to Christian establishments not only marked Muslims and Jews as a tolerated minority within society, but implied their participation and belonging in quintessentially Christian foundations. Ultimately this “accepted” or, rather, required contribution by Jews and Muslims to Christian institutions was a show of Christian domination over both of them, as well as being a question of practicality. The situation in Latin Europe stands in stark contrast to the practices and tone of cross-religious giving in Islamic lands.

### **Compulsory Muslim and Jewish Participation in Celebrations of Holy Week, Corpus Christi, and Saints’ Days**

Even more than the festival of St. Stephen or Christmas, Holy Week—the week before Easter—and the festival of Corpus Christi (approximately two months later) prompted forced shared veneration and participation by non-Christians. It also inspired contestations of such sharing and ritualized violence. Compulsory “shared” celebration ensured that no religious dissent could be visibly expressed during the festival. At the same time, public displays of Muslim or Jewish celebration or obeisance as part of the festival, co-opted difference as both an aesthetic enhancement and an assertion of Christian truth and power to make that truth acknowledged. For example, in fifteenth-century Sicily, Jewish as well as Christian merchants were required to decorate the area in front of their shops for Corpus Christi.<sup>89</sup> In Iberia, Jews and Muslims were expected to provide more than mere passive visual ornamentation for the festival; they were part of the aural and visual spectacles that were integral to Corpus Christi and most other late medieval processions. For example, in a text from Madrid enumerating the costs and activities for the Corpus Christi celebration in 1481, town officials “mandate that the Muslims and the Jews bring out that day, the Muslims their games and dances, and the Jews his dance.” Muslims and Jews who did not comply were to be charged the same penalty as Christian

**87** Grazyel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 1:300/301, 322/323, 330/331, 332/333.

**88** Almagro Vidal, “Más allá de la aljama.” Also see Almagro Vidal, “Military Orders.”

**89** Simonsohn, ed., *The Jews in Sicily*, 7:4096–97, no. 4656 from the Archivo Storico del Comune di Palermo, Atti Bandi e Provviste, reg. 91, c. 14v, Palermo, June 1, 1482, p. 4360, no. 5035, from the Archivo Storico del Comune di Palermo, Atti Bandi e Provviste, reg. 95, c. 15v, Palermo, June 10, 1487; Simonsohn, ed., *The Jews in Sicily*, 8: 4595, no. 5312, from the Archivo Storico del Comune di Palermo, Atti Bandi e Provviste, reg. 99, c. 10r–v, Palermo, June 1490.

officials who failed to contribute to the procession.<sup>90</sup> From the discussion within the document, part of the concern is clearly an equitable distribution of the costs as well as labour for putting on the elaborate event. Yet this text testifies to but one of a number of incidents in which Iberian rulers or town officials compelled and/or sponsored Muslim or Jewish entertainers to participate in Corpus Christi, or other public Christian spectacles. In these, it is clear that the specific type of music, dance and games associated with Muslims and Jews were especially sought.<sup>91</sup>

While obliging Jews to adorn their mercantile space along the path of a Corpus Christi procession, or requiring Muslims and Jews to dance as part of Corpus Christi pageantry, might be attributed to civic pride, economic necessity, or a desire for aesthetic continuity, other regulations were unambiguous in the intent to enforce at least the appearance of Jewish respect for the Eucharist. In both Avignon and Barcelona during the fourteenth century, Jews were required to kneel if they were outside when the priest passed by bearing the Eucharistic host in procession.<sup>92</sup> One finds a similar regulation in the *Siete Partidas*, the law collection attributed to King Alfonso X of Castile (1252–1284), although the encounter was imagined within a more mundane setting rather than as part of a festive procession in an urban context:

It happens sometimes that Jews and Christians encounter the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, when they (priests) are taking it for communion for someone who is sick, as it says in the law before this; and to this end we say that any one of those or anyone not of our law, or who does not believe it who encounters the body of Christ would do well if he chose to humble himself as do the Christians, because this is the truth, and the other not; but if he does not want to do this, we command that he take himself off the street so that the clergyman may pass through it freely. And anyone who does not do thusly, as soon as it is proven, the judge of that place shall put him in prison.<sup>93</sup>

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**90** “mandaron que los moros e los judios saquen el dicho dia, los moros sus juegos e danzās e los judios su danza.” Palacio, *Manual del empleado en el Archivo general de Madrid*, 502; Muñoz Fernandez, “Fiestas laicas y fiestas profanas”; Rodriguez, *La comunidad mudéjar de Madrid*, 127; Cuffel “Seductive Sounds.”

**91** Catlos, *Muslims of Medieval Christendom*, 438–39, 490–91; Cuffel, “Seductive Sounds”; Devany, *Enemies in the Plaza*, 145–47, 150, 154–56, 159, 162–64, 166–67; Reynolds, “Music in Medieval Iberia.” Muslims, at least, were also employed by Christian kings and nobles as martial musicians. See Echevarria, *Knights on the Frontier*, 112, 122, 133, 257, 284, 298, 300.

**92** Vat. lat. 14777 fol. 4v (years 1371–1372) and Vat. lat. 14776 fol. 47 (year 1367) Régné, *History of the Jews in Aragon*, James II (1291–1327) no. 2774; Devany, *Enemies in the Plaza*, 156; Catlos, *Muslims of Medieval Christendom*, 365; Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 31; Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 289; Chiffolleau, *La compatibilité de l’au delà*; Chiffolleau, *Les justices du Pape*, 204; Kayserling, “Notes sur l’histoire des juifs d’Espagne.”

**93** “Acaesce a las vegadas que los judios et los moros se encuentran con el cuerpo de nuestro sennor Iesu Christo, quando lo lievan para comulgar a algunt enfermo, segunt dice en la ley ante desta; et por ende decimos que qualquier dellos o otro que no fuere de nuestra ley o non la creer se contrare con el corpus Christi que fara bien, si le quiesiere humilliar as como lo facen los christianos, porque esta es la verdat et otra non; mas si est onon quisiere facer, mandamos que se

This particular gesture was unmistakably one of veneration, rather than mere communal civic engagement. All of these forms of compulsory participation, however, had the effect of erasing visual evidence of dissent with Christian celebration and the doctrine behind it. Furthermore, without taking the additional (and illegal, according to canon law) step of requiring Jews and Muslims to convert, Christian demands that Jews and Muslims join elements of their religious rituals compelled Jews and Muslims, however insincerely, to go through the motions of Christian worship and recognition of the exultation and rightness of Christian belief. This urge to create a public, visual illusion of Muslim and Jewish reverence for Christian holy objects and shared ritual expressed fairly explicitly in the passage from *Siete Partidas*, when it states that a Muslim or Jew encountering the Eucharist would do well to “humble himself as do the Christians, because this is the truth, and the other not.” Muslims and Jews are given the opportunity to avoid such a display in this text, but to do so they were required to remove themselves from the view of the Christians, or, failing that, be incarcerated.

Such regulations, along with commands that Jews and Muslims actively join the merriment accompanying Corpus Christi, were at odds with concomitant prohibitions against Jews or Muslims being in the streets or visible at all during the holiday. Proscriptions against Jewish and Muslim involvement will be examined in detail in chapter six, however, a few words about the seeming contradiction in requiring Jews and Muslims to imitate/join celebrations Corpus Christi and other Christian holy days while at the same time prohibiting precisely such customs are in order. Recently, following on a thread of his earlier work on the subject, David Nirenberg has argued that Eastertide attacks on the Jews, and particularly the role of children in such incidents, were a form of political dissent against the king. Since Jews were under direct royal protection, to attack the Jews was to attack the king by proxy, without seeming to be in direct rebellion.<sup>94</sup> Presumably, in this scenario, local political and clerical leaders ignored church and royal dictates against damaging Jewish property or Jews themselves, because assaulting the Jews was powerful tool for political protest. His point is convincingly argued; however, I would suggest that this is but one of number of elements at work.

In late medieval and early modern Iberia, Muslim and Jewish music, dance, and games became so much part of what defined a festival, that Christians in that region had difficulty envisioning their celebrations, whether secular or religious, without these elements. Even once the Muslim and Jewish population had been considerably diminished or expelled, Christians dressed up *in the Moorish manner* and continued to engage in the martial games associated with the Muslims, i.e. *juego de cañas*. Styles of music and dancing linked to Muslims and later, *to moriscos* were also performed.<sup>95</sup> Likewise, not

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tuelga de la calle, porque pueda el clerigo pasar por ella desembargadamente. Et qualquier que as non lo feciere, desde que fuer probada, debe el judgador de aquel lugar do esto acaesciere meterlo en la carcel”; Alfonso X, Alfonso X and the Jews, I.4.63. Also in Baer, *Juden im christlichen Spanien*, 2:43.

**94** Nirenberg, *Neighboring Faiths*, 76–88, 110–11.

**95** Ruiz, *A King Travels*, 44, 101–5, 110, 127, 133, 137–38, 143–45, 161, 164, 197–99, 212–19; Devaney, *Enemies in the Plaza*, 155, 159, 162–63.

only had Jewish music and dance become integral to festive occasions, Christian imaginings about their role as opponents to the prophets and to Jesus were memorialized both within the liturgy itself and within dramatic enactments of biblical and apocryphal tales, saints' lives, into which Jews and Muslims were at times inserted, even when they did not belong to the original story.<sup>96</sup> Like the Muslims, Jews continued to be represented in Corpus Christi pageants and drama well into the early modern period, suggesting that both groups were inextricably entwined with Christians' understanding of these festivals' celebration, even when Christian actors had to replace real Muslims or Jews.<sup>97</sup> Thus, one explanation of the contradiction between local willingness, even insistence that Muslims and Jews join in profoundly Christian, religious festivals, despite church prohibitions, is that to the local people, including even some of the clergy, no festival was complete without Jews and Muslims' contribution. Furthermore, as Thomas Devaney has argued, the roles of Muslims and Jews (or Christians representing them) in these processional spectacles were carefully orchestrated to illustrate the hierarchical relationship of both groups to Christianity, their Christian neighbours and king.<sup>98</sup>

### Ritualized Violence in the Context of Shared, Compulsory Rituals

It is in the context of such enacted hierarchies that ritualized violence against the Jews should be understood, a point that a number of scholars have made in various ways.<sup>99</sup> Annual attacks against the Jews or Jewish neighbourhoods during Holy Week can be understood as a category of "forced sharing." Jews, in these instances, were an integral part of a Christian ritual, despite the danger the ritual posed for the lives and belongings of the Jews, and their periodic efforts to be free of the obligation or to obtain greater protection during ritual stonings or other forms of ceremonial attack.<sup>100</sup> As with more rhetorical descriptions of members of the religious other as a part, albeit an inferior

**96** For an example of the insertion of Jews and Muslims into a pageant depicting a saint's life see Harris, "A Catalan Corpus Christi Play." More generally on the liturgy and drama of Holy Week and Corpus Christi in Iberia and other parts of Europe and the role of Jews and Muslims in both, see Devaney, *Enemies in the Plaza*, 139, 144–45, 149–67; Hornby and Maloy, *Music and Meaning*, esp. 45–46, 48, 89–90, 169–72, 201–2; Enders, *Death by Drama*, 118–30; Zambrana, *Judíos y conversos*; Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 271–87; Donovan, *The Liturgical Drama*, 80, 85, 88–89, 108, 143, 147–48, 150–52, 154.

**97** For the continued representation and meaning of Jews and conversos in Corpus Christi drama in Iberia see Zambrana, *Judíos y conversos*. The replacement of Muslims or Jews with Christian actors in pageants also occurred before expulsion. See for example, the mock battles and disputations between Christians and "Muslims", i.e. Christians in Muslim guise, staged by the constable Don Miguel Lucas de Iranzo in 1463 in Jaén. Mata Carriazo, ed., *Hechos del Condestable Don Miguel Lucas de Iranzo*, chap. 10, 98–101; Ruiz, "Elite and Popular Culture"; Cuffel, "Seductive Sounds." For other examples and analysis see: Ruiz, *A King Travels*, 213–45.

**98** Devaney, *Enemies in the Plaza*, 154–67. Ruiz makes a similar argument in *A King Travels*.

**99** Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 215–20; Soussen, "La question de violence rituelle"; Devaney *Enemies in the Plaza*.

**100** ADG, box 24A no. 7 in appendix of Vallicrosa and Battle-Prats, "Un Aboroto," 311–35. Also see Vallicrosa and Battle Prats' analysis; ACA: RP MR 1668 fol. 39v published in Magdalena Nom de

one, of the community of a given saint and witness to the truth of his/her sanctity and truth of "his/her" religion (i.e. that imputed to the holy person by the author of the text in question), the Jews' humiliation and defeat during the festivals, was part of the confirmation of Christian truth and identity. The staged battles in which Christians defeated "Muslims," or the actual defeated Muslims put on display as part of a procession, functioned as a similarly martialized confirmation of Christian dominance over, yet inclusion of, a recognized and necessary religious other.<sup>101</sup>

In examining the representation of Jews in medieval theatrical literature, particularly dramas connected with Holy Week and Corpus Christi, some scholars have suggested that negative portrayals of Jews in Corpus Christi plays may have functioned to spark Christian violence against Jews and/or to express both Christian fears of Jewish violence and desires to punish Jews for their imagined roles in killing Jesus or desecrating the host.<sup>102</sup> Other researchers have warned against assuming that pairings of violence and Judaism extant in some medieval European dramatic and visual traditions connected to the week before Easter or Corpus Christi automatically also hold true for Iberia. Little evidence from medieval Iberia has come to light that suggests that Corpus Christi dramas highlighted Jewish violence or directly encouraged or caused Christian violence against Jews, although Jews were certainly the antagonists in other dramas played during Holy Week and/or Corpus Christi. Visual representations were not always in churches or monasteries in close proximity to a Jewish community, thus a direct correlation between imagery and local Christian anti-Jewish violence is tenuous in such cases.<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, the regularity of attacks on the Jews connected to specific Christian festivals speaks against these outbreaks as being spontaneous expressions of Christian anger. Rather, this behaviour was integral to the holiday itself.<sup>104</sup> Annual attacks against the Jewish quarters often had a ludic, staged quality, suggesting that this custom should be understood as part of the festive "performance" as well as a kind of ritual, violent "play."<sup>105</sup> Yet as closely connected as ritualized expressions of violence and "games" (from the Christian perspective) were to theatre featuring Jews

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Deu, "Delitos de los judíos de Aragón"; ACA: C 939:n, 99r-103r in Baer, *Die Juden*, 1:515–18, no, 342; Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 114–16.

**101** Nirenberg also recognizes the tension between inclusion and exclusion, or at least strictly delimited space. See Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 217–19. Compare with Soussen, "La question de violence rituelle"; Coulet, "De l'intégration à l'exclusion."

**102** Soussen, "La question de violence rituelle"; Soussen, "'Violence rituelle ou émotion populaire?"; Enders, *Death by Drama*, 118–30; Berral, *La Imagen del Judío*, esp. 13–16, 183–84, 188, 192; Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 287; Delumeneau, *La Peur*, 279–87.

**103** Glazer-Eytan, "Jews Imagined and Real"; Devaney, *Enemies in the Plaza*, 150–54; Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 214–23; Zambrana, *Judíos y conversos*. The relatively mild tone of representation of Jews in the early modern Iberian plays parallels in part the tone of some early modern Italian Corpus Christi dramas. See for example Melzi, "Dialogue or Dispute."

**104** Of course, a number of scholars, such as Soussen and Nirenberg forge an intermediate path which allows for both the impact of emotions on the degree and expression of this type of Christian anti-Jewish violence, and which recognizes the ritualized nature of the custom.

**105** Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 211, 219–20; Nirenberg, "Les juifs, la violence et le sacré";

or, indeed Muslims, for our purposes, there is a significant difference. Requiring Jews or Muslims to contribute to Christian religious celebrations, or even a Christianized political procession usually (though not always) involved real Jews and Muslims in a Christian festival. Likewise, appropriating actual Jews as physical targets as part of a religious message, made Jews share in Christian ritual, whether they wished to or not. Having Christians play the roles of Muslims or Jews would not constitute even an involuntary shared practice, although some scholars have considered whether actual Jews were also required to mount the Christian stage and play themselves, or rather, what Christians imagined them to be.<sup>106</sup> If that could be conclusively demonstrated to have been the case, the dramas too would need to be considered within the context of shared religious practice and festivals. Pageants in which Christians played Muslims, when no actual Muslims were available, fall in an intermediate category, because very often Christians were taking on roles which real Muslims once played. Annual dramas featuring Jews and Muslims as part of Holy Week and Corpus Christi *do* testify to enduring Christian preoccupation with both, and to Jews and Muslims' centrality as bearers of symbolic meaning within these festivals. Such dramas were part of a larger, interwoven panorama of ritual activities and spectacles designed to celebrate Jesus, the Eucharist, and stories sacred to the Christians on the one hand, but also to create religious and social hierarchies, some through the *representation* of Jews and Muslims, and others through their *participation*. Once Jews and Muslims no longer lived in Iberia, Christians were left with representation alone, but that representation remained crucial to building Christian self-understanding in the region.<sup>107</sup>

More peculiar is evidence of Muslim participation in Christian escapades of violence against the Jews during Holy Week or Corpus Christi. David Nirenberg has found three instances in which Muslims seem to have joined Christians in ritual violence against Jews during Holy Week, or indications that rulers were concerned that Muslims might do so. The earliest indications of these comes from a document from 8 April 1285, in which King Pedro III of Aragon (ca. 1239–1285) stated:

We have learned from the Jews of Pina that certain Christians and Saracens of Pina invaded their synagogue and broke the place where their Torah resided and took out this Torah and other things there. Therefore, we command (that) to what extent you capture all those Christians whom you find guilty, and

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Nirenberg, "Violencia, memoria, y *convivencia*:" Soussen, "La question de violence rituelle." On the relationship between ritual and play see Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*.

**106** For a discussion of this topic and a review of the literature on both sides see Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 215. Jews and Muslims watching these plays, however, might be considered as an element of shared practice, although as with other kinds of "sharing" the meanings that the various parties assigned to their common experience were likely quite different.

**107** Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*; Ruiz, *A King Travels*; Zambrana, *Judiós y conversos*. Linder also notes the parallel between theatrical portrayals of Jews and ritualized attacks against Jews during Christian holidays. He argues that during rituals of Eastertide violence, Jews "appeared as themselves and acted the part scripted for them by Christians." Linder, "The Jews Too Were Not Absent," 347–48.

obtain their goods, and hold those captured and their confiscated goods until the above mentioned will be brought to justice completely.<sup>108</sup>

No religious holiday or other motive for the joint raid is mentioned in this passage. Given that Easter had taken place on March 25, not long before the directive was issued, and that the assault resembles other incidents more explicitly connected to Holy Week, it seems quite possible that the vandalism was tied to the Christian holiday. The specific targeting of the synagogue and the Torah scroll also strongly points to a religious motivation for the attack, particularly in connection to Holy Week.<sup>109</sup> Although Jews had accused both Muslims (Saracens) and Christians, only culpable Christians are listed among those to be rounded up for punishment, a fact which may suggest that Christians were understood as the prime instigators. Whether the Muslims had been hired, or joined voluntarily for personal, social, political, or religious reasons remains unclear. If the violence was indeed an extension of ritual anti-Jewish violence tied to Holy Week, then the Muslims may be understood as having participated in said Christian ritual, although what their involvement signified for each of the parties concerned, remains unknown.

In 1319 a very similar incident occurred in Daroca. King James II of Aragon (1267–1327) protested that Muslims had scaled the wall of his castle in Daroca where the Jews were living and attacked them with rocks and swords, despite his decree that no one throw rocks at the castle during the eight days of Easter.<sup>110</sup> In this passage the Muslims are portrayed as acting alone, yet a connection between their anti-Jewish violence and the Christian religious festival of Holy Week and Easter is implied when the king notes that their activities were in violation of a prohibition against such activities during the Easter season. A year later, in Alcoletge, the Infante Alfonso decreed that the Jews were allowed to defend themselves against Christians *or Muslims* who intended or in fact invaded or robbed Jews, their houses or goods, injured them or attempted to violently demand that they pay fines. In such cases, the Jews would be subject to neither punishment nor vengeance for injuring or killing their attackers.<sup>111</sup> This decree takes place in August, so neither closely following nor preceding Holy Week, and with no reference to any religious context for the anticipated violence against the Jews. Thus, while the law may have been designed to allow Jews to defend themselves against assaults

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**108** “Intelleximus ex parte judeorum de Pina quod aliqui christiani et sarraceni de Pina invaserunt cinagogam eorum et frugerunt locum ubi manebat thora eorum, et ipsam thoram et alias res inde extraxerunt. Quare mandamus vobis quatenus omnes illos christianos quos cupabiles inveneritis capiatis et bona eorum emparetis, et ipsos captos et bona eorum emparata tenatis donec super predictis fecerint justice complementum”; ACA: C. 56, fol. 62v in Riera i Sans *Els poders públics*, 245 no. 15; Régéné, *History of the Jews in Aragon*, 242, no. 1335.

**109** For other incidents of Christian ritualized violence against Jews during Holy Week which involved breaking in and attacking the Torah see Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 213–14.

**110** ACA: C 121r (1319/4/30) cited in Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 199.

**111** ACA: C 383: 40r–42r (1/8/1320) in Baer, *Juden im christlichen Spanien*, 1:217–18, no.175; Nirenberg, “Les Juifs, la violence et le sacré,” esp. 113–14; Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 205–6.

prompted by Holy Week, the decree could equally well be a broad privilege allowing Jews to react in kind against any type of attack at any time. Violence against Jews on an individual or communal level was not restricted to religious holidays. Certainly, the inclusion of Muslims in all three injunctions indicates that Muslim anti-Jewish violence was an issue in Aragon, and Nirenberg himself has amply outlined tensions between Muslims and Jews during this period in both Aragon and Castile. These rivalries occasionally resulted in violence, and in some regions, such as Daroca, relations between the two communities appear to have been particularly fraught.<sup>112</sup> Two of the three edicts discussed above strongly imply that Muslims joined in violent anti-Jewish outbreaks connected to Christian customs during the week leading up to Easter, and thus actively participated in the Christian festival beyond providing the games, dancing or music discussed earlier in this chapter.

Nirenberg, in his interpretation of Muslim participation in Christian ritual violence against Jews, suggested that it could be attributed to shared Christian and Muslim indignation regarding Jews' rejection of Jesus and Mary.<sup>113</sup> Yet as we have seen, Jews and Muslims competed for the opportunity to join public, Christian processions, and for rank within them, even to the point of violence between the two groups.<sup>114</sup> While not discounting the possibility that Muslims were motivated by their own religious hostility toward the Jews, the struggle between these two minority communities for public recognition of their belonging within the wider society, and for hierarchical precedence over the other also needs to be considered. Joining Christians in Holy Week "games," including stoning Jewish buildings and raiding the synagogue was a way of affiliating themselves more clearly with those in power, precisely in an instance when Jews, their competitors, could not. Furthermore, the nature of the ritual was designed precisely to establish or reaffirm religious and social hierarchy, primarily of Christians over Jews, but by joining the Christians, the Muslims were able to assert their own superiority and power, religiously as well as socially. They would have done so on the one hand, by their very open joining with the Christians in a fundamental, communal, annual ritual that marked the Jews as outsiders. By participating with the Christians, Muslims signalled their own belonging to the wider community, in contrast to the Jews. Furthermore, joining the festival allowed for the physical outlet of any Muslim frustrations against the Jews, whether religious or worldly in nature. Finally, the observations that Nirenberg has made regarding the power of these ritualized outbreaks against the Jews to express political discontent against the king would have applied to the Muslim population as well as the Christians.

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**112** Nirenberg, "Muslim–Jewish Relations." He focuses primarily on Aragon, however.

**113** Nirenberg, "Les Juifs, la violence et le sacré"; Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 206.

**114** See, above, the dispute between Muslims and Jews in Huesca during the reign of King John of Aragon. Also compare with Muslim attacks against Jews who staged a public funeral procession: Lourie, "Jewish Participation in Royal Funeral Rites." In Castile, Echevarria notes that in times of difficulty, Muslims frequently had to borrow from Jews, who could ask for repayment for an indefinite amount of time, in contrast to Christian lenders. Such arrangements could potentially inspire further resentment and competition between the two. See Echevarria, *The City of Three Mosques*, 71.

Overall, therefore, processions in the Western Christian Mediterranean, whether at their core based on a religious or a secular occasion, invariably served to establish religious as well as social hierarchy, and to express under what conditions non-Christians could be understood to be part of a Christian-ruled community. Muslim and Jewish participation in such processions, whether forced or voluntary, reflected the Christian imaginary of each group's place. Christians compelled Jews and Muslims to be a part of their festivals because their sense of self had become inextricably interwoven with their concept of the other. Yet (compulsory) participation did not preclude these rituals from also being performances of exclusion, either publicly marking Jews as outside of correct understanding, or as an attempt to protest or ban Jews, and sometimes Muslims, from the most holy of Christian processions, namely those of the Corpus Christi during Holy Week.<sup>115</sup>

## Conclusions

A number of scholars have underscored Christian anxiety about Christian attraction to Jewish or Muslim religious celebrations, or to being disturbed by the sound of such celebrations.<sup>116</sup> As we shall see in the subsequent chapters on opposition to shared practices, Christians (as well as Muslims and Jews) were anxious about the potential attraction that the festivals of the religious other might offer to members of their own communities. They were also, at times, disturbed by the implications of allowing members of another community join their religious ceremonies. Some prohibited such interreligious participation. Yet for Christians, particularly in Iberia, the contribution of Muslims and Jews to their celebrations became so fundamental that they could not imagine these events without them, even to the point of having Christians pose as Muslims, when no "real" Muslims were available. Jews and Muslims often saw joining public processions or staging their own as a way of affirming their place within a larger interreligious, albeit predominantly Christian, community. The tales of Muslims or Jews seeking intercession from St. Isidore may reflect real cross-over veneration, much as some of the instances studied by Ephraim Shoham-Steiner for Northern Europe. If so, however, such shared participation is buried beneath many layers of rhetoric designed to cast Muslim and Jewish requests for intercession or pilgrimage to sites holy to Isidore as "proofs" of Christian truth and demonstrations of Christian religious and military dominance. Much of the material in this chapter represents the tension between Christian desire that non-Christians join in their celebrations to honour their saints, kings, queens, and popes and discomfort with precisely such religious "convergence." In response, Christians created multiple ways both in the tales they told of their saints, and in their rituals to compel Jews and Muslims to serve the symbolic needs of the Christian community, both broadly, and relative to specific, local contexts. Jewish participation was used to reaffirm long-standing Christian assertions of Jewish possession of the truth, and their displacement as the chosen people of God by Christians, when the Jews violently rejected Jesus and

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**115** Nirenberg, *Neighboring Faiths*, 110–15; Linder, "The Jews Too Were Not Absent"; Coulet, "De l'intégration à l'exclusion."

**116** Cuffel, "Seductive Sounds"; Constable, "Regulating Noise"; Jaspert, "Zeichen und Symbole."

his gospel. Muslims, on the other hand, more often were staged as defeated or willing subjects of victorious Christian military leaders. At times, however, the “falseness” of their prophet and the Qur’an was juxtaposed to Christian truth and scripture. Jews and Muslims also sought to use such “sharing” to heighten their status within Christian society, sometimes at the expense of one another. At other times, Jews, in particular, created counter-narratives, sometimes even weaving their opposition to Christian assertions of power and truth in the very banners they were forced to create in support of the Pope.

## Chapter 4

# PRAISING, CURSING, OR IGNORING THE OTHER JEWS, CHRISTIANS, AND MUSLIMS AT ONE ANOTHER'S HOLY SPACES IN THE ISLAMICATE MEDITERRANEAN

### Introduction

MUCH IN THE legal traditions of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims of the Islamicate world served to delineate and maintain community boundaries. Yet in this chapter I will begin by suggesting that aspects of religious law dealing with charity, donations, inheritance, and, in some cases, treatment of slaves and entertainers facilitated socialization, shared knowledge, rituals, and expressions of veneration of holy spaces between multiple religious communities. Chronicles and hagiographic texts uphold the impression, given by certain legal texts, that Muslims did come to and make donations to churches and continued to see monasteries as waystations, but also, as repositories of *Baraka*, blessing. Christian, Jewish, and Muslim authors alike saw the presence and veneration by the religious other of “their” holy sites and figures as a further affirmation of sanctity and testimony to a given author’s understanding of religious truth. Sainly punishment of disrespectful individuals reestablished the rightful religious hierarchy, from an author’s particular perspective. One letter and a number of Jewish and Muslim hagiographical works grapple with the prospect of a religiously mixed circle of devotees in Sufi study circles and intersecting religious specialists. Authors from both groups largely sought to claim the prestige of the acknowledgement of the religious other yet reaffirm the superiority of their own claims and powers in relation to those others. While chroniclers and hagiographers from all the religious communities had similar strategies of laying claim to miraculous dominance, Muslim travellers and pilgrims differ substantially in their approach to the religious other in comparison to Jews or Christians either from the Islamicate world, or from the West. Whereas Muslim hagiographers included tales where the religious outsider is miraculously revealed, Muslim travel writers worked to distance non-Muslims from holy sites by ignoring or downplaying their presence.

### Legal Background and Foundations for Shared Religious Practices

Shī‘ī law, which is relevant to keep in mind for the Fatimid period directly, and for its potential continuing residual influence among parts of the population during the Ayyubid and Mamluk eras, categorized Christians and Jews not as *dhimmis*, but unbelievers, *kāfirs*. Focusing on Imāmī and Ismā‘īlī law, David Freidenreich notes that starting from the eleventh century CE, this status also meant that Christians and Jews were considered impure. This distinction had a greater effect on how Shī‘ī Muslims interacted with Jews and Christians in the realms of food and marriage, than with the proscrip-

tive laws imposed on these religious minorities. However, under Shī‘ī law, a Muslim could bequeath part of his/her estate to *dhimmi*s, and include them within a *waqf*, so long as the *waqf* was not a non-Muslim religious building or institution.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in early Mālikī and Zāhiri law in al-Andalus and the Maghrib *dhimmi* were also considered impure. In this case, such attitudes impinged upon Muslims accepting clothing previously owned by or food prepared/slaughtered by *dhimmi*s. It also seems to have factored into Mālikī legalists prohibitions against allowing non-Muslims to enter mosques except in very limited situations.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Mālikī law was ambiguous regarding Muslims visiting or worshiping in the religious buildings of non-Muslims. Much as in the Middle East, selected monasteries in al-Andalus were known as royal stop-overs and for accommodating Muslim visitors, and such behaviour was grudgingly accepted by legalists.<sup>3</sup> This acceptance created the possibility for Muslims to share or visit the religious spaces of non-Muslims. Outside of the official *zakat*, charitable tax, Sunnis could also provide charity to non-Muslims.<sup>4</sup> This allowance in various schools and forms of Islamic law presumably made Muslim donations to churches and monasteries—discussed below—or the distribution of charity to non-Muslims as well as Muslims at sites like Hebron, unproblematic.

Byzantine, Latin Christian, and most Muslim legal material addressing the religious other was written from a position of power. That of Jews living on either side of the Mediterranean, and that of Christian communities under Islamic or Mongol rule were not. This power differential is, at times, reflected in minority groups’ approaches to shared religious practices and other forms of social mixing with members of the dominant religious group, and also, potentially, with members of other minority communities. According to Freidenreich, unlike Muslim, Western, and Byzantine Christian legal collections, the legal literature of the Coptic and Armenian communities, the Syrian Orthodox and Syrian Church of the East, from the eleventh century CE throughout our period, do not contain a special legal category or chapter for religious outsiders.<sup>5</sup> Which is not to say that Muslims and Jews are absent from nomocanons, or conciliar literature. Jews and Muslims, referred to as *ḥanpā* (ܚܢܦܐ) in Syriac, or *ḥanīf* (حنيف) in Arabic, appear in discussions of inheritance, slavery, and most important for our purposes, mixed or shared practices.<sup>6</sup> While most laws were proscriptive, others made accommodation for dona-

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1 Freidenreich, “Christians in Early and Classical Shī‘ī Law” Prior to the eleventh century, according to Freidenreich, opinions about the impurity of *dhimmi*s and the potential implications of such impurity, were mixed. Assertions of the impurity of Christians and Jews were often couched in terms of Shī‘ī anti-Sunni polemic.

2 Aillet, “Construction des frontières interconfessionnelles.” As Cyrille Aillet points out, however, not all Sunni legal schools were in accord with this position. See also Fattal, *Le Statut légal*, 91–92.

3 Aillet, “Construction des frontières interconfessionnelles.” On Muslims visiting monasteries in the Eastern Mediterranean regions, see below and concomitant bibliography.

4 Freidenreich, “Christians in Early and Classical Sunni Law.”

5 Freidenreich, “Muslims in Eastern Canon Law.”

6 Freidenreich, “Muslims in Eastern Canon Law”; Weltecke, “Zum syrisch-orthodoxen Leben”; Weltecke, “Multireligiöse Loca Sancta”; Hartmann and Pennington, *History of Byzantine Canon and*

tions by non-Christians. Dorothea Weltecke, in her study of Bar Hebraeus' *Nomocanon* as a source for social history, notes that Bar Hebraeus (1226–1286 CE) transformed earlier laws that prohibited placing cloths depicting mythological scenes or divinities on a Christian altar into a regulation against using textiles containing Muslim expressions of belief as altar cloths. On the other hand, according to his *Nomocanon*, the vessels of “heretics”/Muslims (*ḥanpā*) may be used for the altar, if the bishop approves. She takes this passage as an indication that Christians accepted donations from Muslims.<sup>7</sup> This interpretation is supported by accounts in Christian chronicles describing Muslims giving gifts to monasteries and churches, often as an expression of thanks for hospitality or healing.<sup>8</sup> Yet it is worth noting that Bar Hebraeus' allowance of such gifts, with permission of the bishop, constitutes a concession in comparison to earlier Christian legal collections. Consider, for example, the following passage from *Kitāb al-Hudā*, the Maronite law code, translated from Syriac to Arabic in 1059:

And nothing should be received from anyone of the West, the Zoroastrians, the Jews, and any others, which is contrary to Christian law from that which is brought near the altar, for example, cloth or a turban, or a bordered textile or a cup, or offering, or drink, or anything else which would debase the pure altar. Regarding what is offered by these (people) of oil for lamps or incense, it is permitted to accept it from them.<sup>9</sup>

Both of these law books point to donations to churches from other religious groups, or across Christian denominations, if one assumes “anyone from the West” may refer to other Christians. Other prescriptive legal collections also contain indications of inter- and intra-religious donations, and these will be addressed in the following chapter, since the evidence derives from the opposition to shared practices that they express. The donation laws in these two texts are also oppositional, yet what sets the *Kitāb al-Hudā* and Bar Hebraeus' *Nomocanon* apart is the *permission* they give for donations from outsiders, although both attempt to control or limit such donations. Both ban textiles as donations, though the author of *Kitāb al-Hudā* does not specify why. Vessels for the altar are also forbidden in *Kitāb al-Hudā*, in contrast to Bar Hebraeus, although Bar Hebraeus still requires dispensation from the bishop for them to be received. *Kitāb al-Hudā* treats all such objects as “debasement” the purity of the altar, yet oil and incense are accepted. One finds similar concerns in the *Synodicon of the West Syrian Church*. In the section

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*Eastern Canon Law*, 28–30, 125–26, 131, 283–85. The meanings of *ḥanpā* and *ḥanīf* along with their cognates is complicated and much debated by scholars. In Arabic especially, it can mean “true believer” or monotheist, among Muslim authors, or “pagan” among Christian ones. See Monferrer Sala, “*Hanīf <ḥanpā>*”; Blois, “*Naṣrānī*.”

**7** Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, I.5; Weltecke, “Zum syrisch-orthodoxen Leben,” esp. 604–5. Bar Hebraeus also uses derivatives from ܗܘܪܐ relating to Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, another designation for Muslims.

**8** See discussions of examples of this behaviour later in this chapter.

**9** ولا يقبل من احد الغربية و المجوس , و اليهود, و غيرهم من مخالفي الشريعة المسيحية شي مما يقرب به على المذبح, مثل ثوب او منديل او دسفن او كاس او قربان او شراب او غير ذلك مما يندوا من المذبح الطاهر, فاما من قرب من هولاي زينتا للفنديل او بخورا فانه يجوز ان يقبل منه *Kitāb al-Hudā*, 71.



potentially included Christians from other denominations, and a variety of non-Christians, which, seemingly, encompassed Zoroastrians, Jews, and Muslims, under the guise of “Pagans.”<sup>14</sup> Alternatively, or in addition, to the hypothesis that Christian communities in the Islamicate world became progressively more inclined to accommodate and accept gifts from other religious groups, it may be that some Christian communities were more willing than others. As we shall see in Chapter 6, Armenian and Byzantine Christians appear to have been somewhat less accommodating to confessional outsiders.<sup>15</sup> Evidence from Muslim and Christian narrative sources clearly point to Muslim fascination with monasteries and churches, which, in turn, facilitated such cross-religious generosity.

In part, such measures may also reflect Christians’ reluctance to antagonize their Muslim or Mongol overlords, or an example of an oft noted tendency among Christian lawmakers to adapt Muslim law; just as some schools of Muslim law allowed Muslims to give charity or even part of a *waqf* to non-Muslims, so too did Christian legalists allow for gifts from non-Christians.<sup>16</sup> This tension, between bridging and building boundaries between religious communities in these legal texts, mirrors the rhetoric of sources richer in narrative and fancy, but equally poised between integration and regulation of the religious other.

In addition to regulating donations *from* non-Christians, charity *to* outsiders was an integral part of some law books of Christian communities within the Islamic world. For example, in the thirteenth-century Coptic law collection, *Majmū’ al-Qawānīn*, the author, al-Ṣafī ibn al-ʿAssāl specifies that a place should be made for strangers, poor, and sick in every town, run by a competent monk.<sup>17</sup> It is not clear whether “stranger” (*ghurabā’* غريباء) means simply a non-local Christian, an interpretation supported by the stipulation that the monk who ran such hostels should be a “stranger” himself, or may also encompass non-Christians. We know from narrative and poetic sources by both Muslims and Christians, however, that such charity along with more extensive hospitality for visitors was considered praiseworthy and was practised by monasteries.<sup>18</sup>

In the Syrian Orthodox tradition, charity extended to giving Muslims the eucharist or edible relics in times of illness. In the questions and answers between one Jōḥannān ʿEṣṭūnārā to Jaʿqōb (Jacob of Edessa ca. 640–708 CE) Jōḥannān inquires:

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**14** It is rather odd for a Maronite code to refer to Zoroastrians, given that Maronites mostly dwelt in what is now Lebanon and Syria. It is possible that this law in *Kitāb al-Hudā* reflects an earlier, more eastern precedent, of which I am not aware.

**15** I have not found any materials indicating what the policies of the Church of the East were in this regard.

**16** On the commonalities or “adaptions” of Muslim law by Christian nomocanon authors, see Freidenreich, “Muslims in Eastern Canon Law”; Kaufhold’s introduction to Johannes V. bar Abgārē, *Syrische Text zum islamischen Recht*, 29–34; Nallino, “El dritto musulmano.”

**17** Ibn al-ʿAssāl, *Al Magmou al-Safawi*, 17.8 On this text and author see: Awad, “al-Ṣafī Ibn al-ʿAssāl.”

**18** See discussion and references below in this chapter.



non-Christians, predominantly Muslims by this era. The emphasis on children mirrors what is found in Muslim and other Christian communities' descriptions, and he suggests that the ritual was apotropaic in nature, similar to the healing properties assigned to the eucharistic bread or saints' relics which were likewise made available for Muslim consumption. By providing a baptism dedicated to John the Baptist, for penance rather than conversion, Christians likewise avoided the danger of Muslim authorities accusing them of proselytizing.<sup>24</sup>

Various Christian communities living in the Islamicate world, like their Muslim, and, as we shall see, Jewish neighbours, allowed charity to religious outsiders. Receiving donations from religious outsiders and socializing with them was a contested issue, although the tendency seems to be toward strategies of accommodation. Within the Syrian Orthodox tradition especially, a number of laws existed which allowed for and even encouraged the participation of non-Christians in Christian rituals. The language of these laws makes clear that the participants expected were Muslims.<sup>25</sup>

For Jews living in the Middle East, Mark Cohen has already demonstrated that Moses b. Maimon, also known as Maimonides (ca. 1135–1204 CE), adapted many of the legal rulings of the Gaonim regarding economic and trading practices, including those touching upon relations between Jews and non-Jews. He shows that the *Mishnah Torah* reshapes laws to account for the shift from the more agriculturally based economy of the earlier period to an increasingly urban environment which involved long distance trade and non-Jewish, primarily Muslim, business partners of various sorts.<sup>26</sup> Yet Maimonides' rulings were not focused only on economic relations. Like Muslim and Christian legal literature from around the same period, the *Mishnah Torah* provides a wealth of legal rulings regarding Jewish interactions with non-Jews in many areas of life. Not surprisingly, given the concern regarding ritually pure food in Judaism, questions of what foods and drink, especially wine, could be prepared, shared, and how, between different types of Jews, different types of non-Jews, converts to Judaism, and varying degrees of converts, are all discussed extensively, both in practical and in more theoretical or even eschatological scenarios. These concerns regarding sharing of food find parallels in Christian law codes in both Muslim and Christian dominated lands.<sup>27</sup> Conversion is another area in which theoretical issues, such as the identity of the four biblical nations which may not convert to Judaism, mix with practical issues, such as the conversion of slaves, or the

**24** Taylor, "The Syriac Baptism of St. John." For a discussion of Muslim sources on such rituals see Chapter 5, for Greek and Armenian descriptions and contexts, see Chapter 6.

**25** The Syriac churches inherited the same regulations against eating or other forms of socialization with Jews (see Chapter 6). At times however, the laws seem to provide enough detail to suspect they reflected ongoing socialization. In the *Synodocon orientale*, there is a lengthy complaint about going to Jewish taverns after taking the eucharist, even when Christian drinking establishments abound. Canon XVII, Syriac, 225, French, 489. In Vööbus, ed. and transl., *The Synodicon in West Syrian Tradition*, CSCO 367, p. 174, no. 35; 368, p. 166, no. 35, a priest who eats with a Jew is to be banned from serving until he promises not to do so again.

**26** Cohen, *Maimonides and the Merchants*.

**27** Freidenreich, *Foreigners and their Food*, 85–128, 179–98; Weltecke, "Zum syrisch-orthodoxen Leben."

children of maidservants/concubines. Evidence not only from his *Mishnah Torah*, but also in his and other Jewish leaders' responses to legal questions regarding the conversion of slaves and free Christians suggests that there was a fairly regular influx of "new" Jews coming into the community.<sup>28</sup> The degree to which these may have participated in or encouraged any kind of shared practice remains an open question, but an important one, given evidence that converts to Islam during the period often continued to be involved in the practices of their previous religion. Whether the same was true of Christian converts to Judaism, or Jewish converts to Christianity has yet to be investigated systematically.<sup>29</sup> Moses Maimonides' careful attention to delineating acceptable ways of interacting with non-Jews on all levels, and his insistence on the kindly treatment of partial and full converts, should be seen in the broader context of his legal-philosophical endeavours to clarify the status of non-Jews and Jews alike during the Messianic era, and to develop a systematic, comparative understanding of the evolution of religions.<sup>30</sup> That said, his legal code had very concrete implications, which follow some of the same concerns we see reflected in Christian and Muslim sources from around the same period.

Rules designed to establish and regulate borders between different religious groups often also indicate extensive cross-religious socializing and degrees of observance within the community, even as they try to control such interactions. For example:

A Gentile prostitute (*zonah 'ovdei ha-kokhavim*) (is) at a party of Israel, the wine is permitted, which you have confirmation about her and she will not touch (it), but a Jewish prostitute (*zonah isra'elit*) at a party of Gentiles (*mesibat 'ovdei ha-kokhavim*), her wine which is before her in her cup [literally: "utensil"] is forbidden because they have touched it without her knowledge.<sup>31</sup>

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**28** Moses b. Maimon, *Mishnah Torah*, "Sefer Qedushah, hilkhot 'isurei bi'ah," chap. 12.11–25. On conversion, especially of slave women, see Cuffel, "Conversion and Religious Polemic"; Yagur, "Religious Identity," 26, 37, 42–43, 70, 72–131, 205–13, 217, 222, 228–30, 233–34, 238, 243, 246, 247, 251; Perry, "Conversion as an Aspect of Master–Slave Relationships"; Perry, "Daily Life of Slaves"; Friedman, *Polygamy in the Middle Ages*. Also see Cohen, *Poverty and Charity*, 125–29. He assumes that the proselytes mentioned in as seekers and beneficiaries of charity were all or primarily European. Presumably the Christian communities living under Islamic rule also had intimate daily contact with non-Christians through the institution of slavery, although as far as I know, this issue has not been studied in depth.

**29** Of course one has a similar situation in Europe for conversos and moriscos, Jews and Muslims who had converted to Christianity, willingly, forcibly or under pressure. A comparative study which encompasses and compares both the Middle East and Europe and the interplay between the regions in order to examine the engagement of converts with their former religion and community, and their impact on the "new" religious community is a desideratum, but outside the scope of the present study. Tartakoff's *Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder* begins to address some of these questions.

**30** Kellner, *Maimonides on Judaism*, esp. 33–57; Stroumsa, *Maimonides in his World*.

**31** זונה עכו"ם במסיבה של ישראל, היין מותר, שאימתן עליה ולא תגע, אבל זונה ישראלית במסיבת עכו"ם, יינה שלפניה  
תהא מודעתה. בבבליה אסור, מפני שהן נוגעין בו שלא מדעתה. Moses b. Maimon, *Mishnah Torah*, "Sefer Qedushah, hilkhot  
ma'akhalot," chap. 12.26.

This excerpt is part of a long list of passages discussing what may be considered pure, if there is a possibility that wine or food has come into contact with non-Jews. This particular segment is also as much about the trustworthiness of women designated as *zonah*—which may mean a promiscuous woman, or refer to a professional prostitute—as it is about the limits of socialization between Jews and non-Jews. Relevant to the current discussion, however, is the recognition, even expectation, that a Jewish “party” might have a non-Jewish female entertainer, or that party hosted by non-Jews could have a Jewish woman present.<sup>32</sup> The passage serves as a reminder that interactions between Jews and non-Jews in the Middle East ranged the gambit between formal economic partnerships, roles within the Muslim government, intellectual exchanges, to the most informal, intimate interchanges, which Maimonides and other Jewish leaders attempted to regulate, but not entirely prevent.<sup>33</sup> The social settings of these encounters, whether at a celebration, as described in the passage above, or sharing a meal, a courtyard, all involved close, regular contact.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, some of the interpretations expounded by Maimonides facilitated Jewish participation in certain non-Jewish ceremonies. These included activities such as attending the funerals of non-Jews, visiting their sick, and providing charity for the non-Jewish poor.<sup>35</sup> For example, on one Jewish accounts list, Goitein found a gift of charity to the Muezzin living near the synagogue of the Palestinians.<sup>36</sup> In another Geniza document the Christian (*al-’arel* אֵלְעֵרֶל) “Good” (טוב *טוב*) also seems to be a recipient.<sup>37</sup> Providing charity regardless of religious affiliation was a practice not only among Jews of Egypt but also of Byzantium and Western Europe, although as Cohen notes, when resources were stretched, local communities were sometimes loathe to provide charity to foreigners of any kind.<sup>38</sup> Cohen suggests the insistence on assisting foreigners among Jews in the Islamic world derived from a long tradition of such support in Islam, although in fact, Christian monasteries in the Middle East also had similar customs, as

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**32** It is not entirely clear whether the concern is to explain how the Jewish woman should behave regarding wine at a Gentile party, or whether the intent is to warn other Jews that even wine which sits directly before such a Jewish woman, will be contaminated.

**33** Moses b. Maimon, *Mishnah Torah*, “Sefer Mad’a , hilkhoh yesodei ha-Torah,” chap. 5.6–8, p. 36, “Sefer Qedushah, hilkhoh ma’akhalot,” chap. 11.3–7, p. 287, chap. 12.7, 26 pp. 288, 289, chap. 13 pp. 289–290, “Sefer Shoftim, hilkhoh melkhim,” chap. 10.12. (This is but a sample of passages discussing food exchanges, not a comprehensive list). For a discussion of Gentiles and converts in Maimonidean eschatology, see Kellner, *Maimonides on Judaism*, 33–47.

**34** See for example, Moses b. Maimon, *Mishnah Torah*, “Sefer Qedushah, hilkhoh ma’akhalot,” chap. 12.20.

**35** Moses b. Maimon, *Mishnah Torah*, “Sefer Shoftim, hilkhoh evel,” chap. 3.3, chap.14.12, pp. 759, 764, “Sefer Shoftim, hilkhoh melkhim,” chap. 10.12, p. 771. Cohen, *Maimonides and the Merchants*, 44–45; Cohen, *Poverty and Charity*, 72–108. Of course most charity was intended for members of the community, whether local or coming from abroad.

**36** TS Misc. Box 8 fol. 61 as cited in Goitein *A Mediterranean Society*, 2:452, no. 46

**37** ENA 2592, fol. 29 l.7 in Gil, ed. and transl., *Documents of the Jewish Pious Foundations*, 461

**38** Cohen, *Poverty and Charity*, 103–4; For example, Assis discusses charitable practices and the establishment of hospices among the Jews of Aragon; however, in this case, the question of supporting non-Jews was not raised. See Assis *Golden Age*, 242–49.

we have seen.<sup>39</sup> Thus, like some canon law texts and Muslim rulings outlined above, the *Mishnah Torah* created space for making or accepting donations, or attending ceremonies across religious boundaries. In this, Maimonides was not so much unique as exemplary of legal trends among Jews in the Islamicate Mediterranean and elsewhere.

Thus, whether composed by those in power, or by leaders of subjugated communities, legal systems established hierarchies which, on the one hand constructed boundaries between religious communities by regulating food, dress, marriage, inheritance, etc., but which also acknowledged the existence of other groups and created guidelines for interaction with them. Such guidelines laid the groundwork for religious inclusion on a limited scale, while still working to preserve the religious identity of each of the groups in question.

### **Participation of the Religious Other in the Writings of Christians and Jews under Muslim Rule**

Like their European counterparts, Christians and Jews living under Muslim rule in Egypt and the Levant also recorded the presence or participation of Muslims in either a neutral fashion, or with pleasure. Similar patterns emerge; the presence and favourable recognition by Muslims, especially Muslim leaders are a source of pleasure for Christian and Jewish authors alike, and both occasionally regaled their readers with tales of Muslims being subject to divine punishment when they treated the holy places or people of a Christian or Jewish community with disrespect. For Christians living under Muslim rule however, state support was particularly cherished. While the religious other of choice in Eastern Christian and Jewish sources remained the Muslims, both Jews and Christians presented the other as important “witnesses” to the sanctity and truth of individuals or sites, although the degree of pleasure vs. hostility and compulsion involved varied from author to author. Late Jewish sources (Mamluk and Ottoman) provide indications of Jews turning to Muslim holy figures and ritual specialists, and of cooperation as well as competition between these specialists and their Jewish counterparts. Indications of the same phenomenon between Jewish and Christian holy figures are less clear, but suggestive.

### **Muslims and Jews as Witnesses to Truth and Sanctity in Christian Sources**

Christian authors seemed especially enthusiastic when high-ranking Muslims attended or participated in Christian festivals, sought out Christian holy individuals, or visited monasteries. This pattern suggests that many Christians in these regions rule sought to portray Muslim participation or endorsement as an affirmation of their own faith, much as western European Christians and Jews did. The Melkite Christian chronicler, Yahyā ibn Saʿīd of Antioch (eleventh century CE) records the various prohibitions and

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**39** Cohen, *Poverty and Charity*, 106. Maimonides seems to have been influenced by Islamic law, religious thought, and practice in other areas as well, even as he in turn influenced later generations of Muslims and Christians in both the Middle East and Europe; see Stroumsa, *Maimonides in his World*, 66–70. See Muehlethaler, ed., *Höre die Wahrheit*.

persecutions on the part of the Faṭimid Caliph, al-Ḥākim (b. 985–d.1021 CE), including al-Ḥākim's rather inconsistent policies toward Christian festivals and Muslim attendance at them. For example, Ibn Sa'īd notes that al-Ḥākim prohibited Christians and Muslims alike from carrying palm branches and participating in Palm Sunday processions, and during one *'id al-Ghiṭās* (Epiphany), or *'id al-Ḥammīm*, as it is called in this passage, the Caliph forbade any mention of the holiday, let alone celebrating it, whereas in previous years he had not only allowed it but also observed the celebrations personally.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, Ibn Sa'īd carefully records a number of occasions when al-Ḥākim, his sister, al-Sayyida, his son and successor, the caliph al-Zāhir, or local Muslim authorities travelled to churches or monasteries, made donations to them and/or oversaw their restoration, attended Christian festivals and protected their festivities.<sup>41</sup> In the same passage in which Ibn Sa'īd describes the strict prohibition against Christians and Muslims carrying palm branches and processing together, he also portrays the customs prior to the prohibition, stating: "The cross was carried publicly. The governor of the town rode (on horseback) with all his cortege accompanying the Christians and defending them."<sup>42</sup> As I have argued elsewhere, the public display of the cross, the Muslim official's riding, presumably with all the usual accoutrements, such as saddles, with a whole group of his followers in such a way as to appear part of the Christian procession itself, and finally his protection of the Christians, all emphasize various dignities which *dhimmi*s were not normally allowed, such as carrying religious symbols publicly, and depict this important Muslim and those under his employ as not merely defenders of the Christians, but seemingly part of the Christian celebration and willing to violate the hierarchy of Muslim over Christian stipulated in Muslim law.<sup>43</sup> Noting that the caliphs al-Ḥākim and al-Zāhir them-

**40** Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd, *Histoire*, PO vol. 23, fasc. 3, pp. 464–66, 487–88, 490–96, 502–3, 506–7, 510–14.

**41** Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd, *Histoire*, PO vol. 23, fasc. 3, pp. 493; Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd, *Histoire*, PO vol. 47 fasc. 4 no. 212, pp. 442/443, 452/453, 454/455. "Al-Sayyida," literally, "the lady," is presumably Sitt al-Mulk, the half-sister of al-Ḥākim who reigned as regent for al-Zāhir, who was still minor at the time of his father's death. Cortese and Calderini, *Women and the Fatimids*, 117–27.

**42** *و الصلوات حاملين الصليب مشهورا و يركب والى البلد فى جميع موكبه معهم و يذب عنهم*; Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd, *Histoire*, PO vol. 23, fasc. 3, p. 487. Anna Chrysostomides has argued that this incident indicates the distinction between local practice and overall policy—Chrysostomides, "There Is No Harm in It," esp. 20—however, the author of the chronicle indicates that this had been the custom *before* al-Ḥākim's prohibition of such behaviour. The passage does support Chrysostomides' argument that Muslim regulations had been less restrictive regarding shared space and Muslim participation in Christian processions and festivals more common in this region up through the tenth-century CE.

**43** Cuffel, "Environmental Disasters." Recently scholars have argued that the regulations of the so-called Pact of 'Umar were not uniform or always known and applied in the same forms or versions throughout Muslim lands during the Middle Ages. Safran, *Defining Boundaries*, 15–17, 19; Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire*; Cohen, "What Was the Pact of 'Umar?" Also see Simonsohn, "Between Separation and Assimilation," who underscores the need to consider the historical development of the Pact of 'Umar and texts like it, and to pay careful attention to similar regulations in non-Muslim law. In fact, in the earliest known version of the Pact likely to have circulated in this region, according to Cohen, the issue of riding revolved around riding on saddles, not, seemingly, on what kind of animal was ridden. See Cohen "What Was the Pact of 'Umar?" 139, 142, 150. Displaying crosses publicly, however, was very much an issue; see, for example, 146.

selves watched Christian festivals seems to be a point of pride for this Christian chronicler, although he never explicitly expresses an opinion. Nevertheless, I would argue, the choice of what he recorded is significant, for his Christian readers would have well understood the honour implied by such behaviour. For example, the same insinuation of Muslim belonging that was hinted at in the description of the local Muslim official's participation in Palm Sunday celebrations discussed above, is suggested more forcefully by Ibn Sa'īd's portrayal of al-Ḥākim's relationship with Anbā Ṣalmūn and the monastery of al-Quṣayr. Al-Ḥākim is depicted as associating with the monks, wearing woollen clothes like them, and being so accommodating to Anbā Ṣalmūn, that Muslims accuse the Caliph of having become Ṣalmūn's disciple. Indeed, Ibn Sa'īd carefully describes how al-Ḥākim travels alone to the monastery beyond al-Quṣayr, leaving his attendants behind.<sup>44</sup> Such a detail gives the impression that al-Ḥākim was going there on a personal, spiritual quest, or at least doing something in the monastery which he did not want to share with his (Muslim) followers. The distinction between the clothing of Muslims and non-Muslims, in particular between Muslim and Christian dress, was heavily emphasized in early versions of the Pact of 'Umar and in al-Ḥākim's own quixotically enacted regulations.<sup>45</sup> Thus, for al-Ḥākim himself, an infamous opponent of *dhimmis*, to adopt the clothing and respect the holy places of Christians and to bow to the will of a Christian monk to the point that even his fellow Muslims remark upon it, becomes a testimony for the power of the Christian religion, and a Christian holy man, namely, Anbā Ṣalmūn.

As elsewhere in the narration, Ibn Sa'īd refrains from explicit commentary or moralizing, rather, he presents events which are suggestive, but leaves their interpretation to his readers. Rhetoric, or lack thereof aside, Ibn Sa'īd's chronicle serves as an important Christian witness to the long-standing Muslim fascination with monasteries and churches, one which is expressed in the carefully stipulated rights of Muslims to stay and take shelter in Christian buildings according to early versions of the Pact of 'Umar, but also described in Muslim poetry, and travel accounts, discussed in detail in the next section.<sup>46</sup> In this Melkite source, interest on the part of the Muslim ruling class is depicted as genuine, albeit alternating between prohibition and active fostering of the Christian community. Furthermore, the attraction of general Muslim population is so strong and widespread, according to Ibn Sa'īd, that the Caliph has to forbid Muslims from the processions and other rituals of Christian holidays. This shared ritual behaviour by Muslims and Christians may be an outcome of Fatimid policy identified by Paula Sanders to create unity between different religious factions<sup>47</sup> Whether spontaneous, or

<sup>44</sup> Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd, *Histoire*, PO vol. 47 fasc. 4 no. 212, p. 442/443.

<sup>45</sup> Cohen, "What Was the Pact of 'Umar?"; Simonsohn, "Between Separation and Assimilation"; Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd, *Histoire*, PO vol. 23, fasc. 3, p. 490.

<sup>46</sup> Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire*, 46, 54, 61–62, 64, 72, 80, 85, 171; Cohen, "What Was the Pact of 'Umar?"; Simonsohn, "Between Separation and Assimilation"; Sizgorich, "Monks and their Daughters"; Kilpatrick, "Monasteries through Muslim Eyes"; Campbell, "A Heaven of Wine"; Troupeau, "Les couvents chrétiens."

<sup>47</sup> Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City*, 74–76, 81–82. See, however, the evidence presented by Chysostomides, "There Is No Harm in It," and Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic*

encouraged by the government, however, the peaceable, active participation, or even passive observance by Muslims, was welcome by at least one Christian chronicler.

Many of the same themes appear in volumes of the *History of the Patriarchs* of Coptic Christians from the crusading and Mamluk eras.<sup>48</sup> Certainly, Muslim common folk and leaders of varying levels are depicted as seeking out churches and monasteries and often honouring the Christian priests, abbots, or Patriarchs whom they find, as well as the sacred space itself.<sup>49</sup> For example, the Ayyubid Sultan, al-Kāmil (c. 1177–1238 CE) is described as going to a Christian hermitage which he spied during a hunting trip. When he complains to the hermit of pains in his viscera and asks for healing, the man prays over oil and then gives it to him to rub on the affected area, and the Sultan is cured. This section of the *History of the Patriarchs* continues to describe al-Kāmil's gestures of friendship toward the Coptic community, including the appointment of a Christian governor. This governor, Abū l-Fatūh, in turn, was kind to all, offering of charity to Christians and Muslims alike.<sup>50</sup> In this particular instance there is no question of regular Muslim pilgrimage to a Christian holy site, but rather Muslim identification of sacred Christian edifices as places of refuge and help. Again this behaviour may be seen in the context of Muslim fascination with monasteries and visiting them as part of a pleasant day's outing, yet in this Christian text, the narrative neither serves to titillate the audience, nor to polemicize against the Muslim ruler or regime that engaged in the practice.<sup>51</sup> Rather, for the Christian chronicler, al-Kāmil's behaviour marks him as a pious friend of the Christians. While modern scholars have debated whether Muslims from the Umayyad and Abbasid periods who wrote poetic and narrative accounts of their visits to monasteries, came to these Christian sites for religious reasons or mere entertainment, the medieval Christian author of this chronicle expresses no such doubts. The Sultan is portrayed as actively choosing to go to the hermitage because he sees it as a place of healing. The miraculous ability and holy status of the hermitage's anonymous inhabitant is accepted as a matter of course by the Muslim leader and results in a reward for the entire Christian community. Likewise, the Christian governor, Abū l-Fatūh, treats both Muslims and Christians charitably. The chronicler presents this behaviour as part of a list of characteristics marking the perfect piety of the governor. Equanimity and mutual recognition are presented as the ideal state between Muslims and Christians, while at the same time affirming the power and rightness of Christianity, but with no expectation of conversion.

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Empire, 71–73, 158–59, 166, which indicates that permission for this kind of behaviour by certain Muslim authorities was more widespread in the early Islamic era.

**48** On the authorship of the *History of the Patriarchs*, traditionally attributed to Severus ibn al-Muqaffa, and of the later continuations see Heijer, "Coptic Historiography."

**49** HOCP vol. 2, pt. 3 *Christodoulos-Michael 1046–1102*, Arabic, 165–66, 178–80, 182, 196–98, English, 17–18, 270–74, 276–77, 300–302; HOCP vol. 3, pt. 1 *Macarius II–John V 1102–1167*, Arabic, 38–39, English, 62–63; HOCP vol. 3, pt. 2 *Mark III–John VI 1167–1216*, Arabic, 114, 123, English, 190–91, 206; HOCP vol. 4, pt. 1 *Cyril III, Ibn Lakak 1216–1243*, 103–5, 125–26, 138–44.

**50** HOCP vol. 3, pt. 2 *Mark III–John VI 1167–1216*, Arabic, 122–23; English, 206.

**51** For internal Muslim polemic regarding the visiting of monasteries and other activities there see Campbell, "A Heaven of Wine"; 155–58, 169–73, 220–28.

Similar instances in which Muslims, and more rarely, Jews, are noted as watching or participating in the consecration of a church or joining the procession for the appointment of an abbot or patriarch suggests that the presence of the religious other at such occasions was understood to be a special honour by Coptic, and perhaps other, Christian communities. Part of what contributed to that accolade, was that these observers were not Christian.

The fact that the Sultan himself was the Muslim who turned to the anonymous hermit adds another layer to the story. Christian chroniclers regularly recorded the participation or favourable treatment by Muslim caliphs, emirs, and sultans. Such accounts provided record of past rights granted to them by previous rulers, which could be called upon as precedents when presenting a case for refurbishing churches or monasteries or the right to celebrate a festival in a particular way, or to celebrate it at all. The narrative of al-Kāmil's interaction with the Coptic community discussed above, potentially served as a precedent of gracious treatment by the Muslim government and of having a Christian in a position of government. Furthermore, the emphasis on Abū l-Fatūḥ's beneficent treatment of Muslims countered growing Muslim polemic against allowing Copts to hold positions of authority within the government. These treatises emphasize that this practice is a violation of Islamic law and that Coptic officials were devious and harmful to Muslims under their power.<sup>52</sup>

The portrayal of the circumstances and celebration of the appointment of Patriarch John VII, who was patriarch from 1262–1269 and then again from 1271–1293, further illustrates the interplay between politics, interreligious celebration and visitation, and the careful balancing between depicting Christian power and Muslim esteem and eschewing any direct responsibility for dignities shown to a Christian leader.<sup>53</sup> It begins with a procession in honour the circumcision of al-Kāmil's youngest son, al-Malik al-ʿĀdil. On the way back from Alexandria, the Sultan makes

his way by the monasteries, the Monastery of Abba Macarius in the Wādī Habīb, and he descended to it and the monks entertained and all who were with him and they multiplied for them good things of what was found with the monks. And the Sultan was gracious to them.<sup>54</sup>

Among the gracious acts of the Sultan toward the monks is that he provided written documentation that monks should not be forced to pay the *jiziya* and that the monastery

**52** al-Nābulusī, *The Sword of Ambition*; Ghāzī ibn Wāsiṭī, "An Answer to the Dhimmis"; al-Asnawī, "Asnawī's Tracts against Christian Officials"; Ibn al-Naqqāsh, "Fetoua relatif à la condition des zimmi"; Yarbrough, *Friends of the Emir*; Yarbrough, "A Rather Small Genre"; Yarbrough, "The Madrasa and the non-Muslims"; Yarbrough, "Upholding God's Rule"; Richards, "The Coptic Bureaucracy under the Mamluks." These polemical treatises condemned the practice of having any *dhimmi*, not just Copts, in positions of power, however Coptic officials were the primary target.

**53** On the peculiar train of succession between patriarchs John and Gabriel, see Swanson, *The Coptic Papacy*, 98–99.

**54** وجعل طريقه على الديارات دياراً بو مقار بو ادى هبيب و نزل بها و اضافة الرهبان و كل من معه و اكثروا لهم الخير مما يوجد وعند الرهبان و انعم عليهم السلطان; HOCP vol. 4, pt. 1 *Cyril III, Ibn Lakak 1216–1243*, Arabic, 50–51, English, 104–5.

rather than a monk's relatives could inherit a deceased monk's goods. Finally, the Sultan agrees that they might appoint a patriarch without having to pay the government.<sup>55</sup> Although the monks cannot agree upon a candidate, once they do so, the chronicler calls these "blessed days" and states:

The churches were repaired in the daytime by permission of our lord the Sultan, and the legal decisions of the (Christian) juris consultants were upheld and the Christians nobly honoured riding horses and mules and no one demanded of them the contrary. And the Sultan had esteem for the monks and he was gracious and good towards them, and the inheritance to one another no interfering hand might come between them. And likewise, the Christians and the Jews, the pronouncements of their leaders were accepted regarding their lineage.<sup>56</sup>

Later, once a patriarch had been chosen, he processed from church to church. The Sultan gifted him with sumptuous robe of honour and as he came from the Church of Michael, the "alien nations" (الامم الغريبة), Muslims and Jews gathered in great numbers even as priests and other Christians sang hymns, carrying crosses and gospels, and riding upon horses and mules, accompanied by the playing of trumpets, flutes, and drums.<sup>57</sup>

As with the previous example, the Christian chronicler depicts the Muslim sultan's visit to a Christian religious site, in this case, a monastery, as a positive event. Any religious motivation is less clear, however. While it is possible that the sultan sought the monks' blessing for his recently circumcised son, the text does not indicate such motivation. Rather, the emphasis on entertainment and "good things of what was found with the monks" (الخير مما يوجد عند الرهبان)—among which is abundant food, as the text later specifies—suggests that the monastery was a pleasurable stopover during al-Kāmil's outing, much as monasteries had been for Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs and their entourage before him. Nevertheless, it is clear that the presence of such an esteemed Muslim in a monastery was welcomed by the Christians. Regardless of the motivation of the sultan himself, the visit also had substantial consequences for the religious life of the Christians and Jews under al-Kāmil's rule, namely freedom in leadership, legal matters, and the repair of religious buildings. Added to these was the dignity of transportation via horseback and the public, even noisy display of these privileges and religious objects like the gospels in procession. As in previous accounts, the careful indication of the freedom of public, non-Muslim worship, marked an occasion of wonder and celebration, since such displays were normally prohibited under Muslim rule. Yet there are some significant differences. Whereas in Yahyā ibn Sa'īd's chronicle, discussed earlier, the presence of the caliph's men on horseback added dignity to a Christian festival, here

**55** HOCP vol. 4, pt. 1 *Cyril III, Ibn Lakak 1216–1243*, Arabic, 50–51, English, 105.

**56** هذه الأيام كانت إياما مباركة الكنائس تعمر بالنهار نادن مولانا السلطان و قنارى الفقها و النصرارى مكرمون معزوزون ركاب الخيل و البغال و لا يطالبهم احد بغيرار و السلطان مرااع للرهبان منعم عليهم محسن اليهم و ارثهم بعضهم للبعض لا يدخل بينهم يد حشريه و كذلك و النصرارى و اليهود ثقيل اقوال مقدميهم في انسابهم; HOCP vol. 4, pt. 1 *Cyril III, Ibn Lakak 1216–1243*, Arabic, 60, English, 125–26.

**57** HOCP vol. 4, pt. 1 *Cyril III, Ibn Lakak 1216–1243*, Arabic, 66–67, English, 138–40. Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City*; Gordon, ed. *Robes and Honor*.

the Christians themselves are allowed this honour. Nor does the sultan have to be bullied by a member of the holy dead into granting such license, as in the contest between the sultan and R. Meir in the travelogue of R. Petachia of Regensburg. Instead it is the *willing* accordance of such freedoms by the Muslim leader which is cause for celebration. The Christians in this narrative have more liberty and power than in other accounts of the triumphs by religious minorities. They need no saintly intervention because it is al-Kāmil himself who has become the focus of glorification for his sanctity and pious behaviour. As such, he is both a powerful outsider who adds dignity to Christian sites and individuals, precisely because of his status as leader of the Muslims, yet also a devotee who recognizes the worthiness of the monks and patriarch.

Ordinary Muslims, Jews, and unspecified foreigners are also part of the patriarch's procession and accompanying religious solemnities. The presence of these non-Christians and/or foreigners, even as spectators, augment the dignity and sense of wonder surrounding this Christian procession and the patriarch himself, much as the aura of piety surrounding Abū l-Fatūḥ, the Christian governor, was based in part on his willingness to provide charity to members outside of his community. The approbation of the crowd, including and perhaps especially of Jews and Muslims, become a litmus test for the Christian leader's worthiness. The relationship between religious merit and the esteem of non-Christians becomes apparent in an incident described by Syrian Orthodox chronicler and patriarch, Michael the Syrian (d. 1199). There is a dispute over who should hold the "Chalcedonian" patriarchate. When one of the candidates, Nicholas, comes to Antioch to claim the position, some go out to receive him, whereas others throw rocks at him. The Jews and "Pagans," presumably meaning Muslims, laugh at the whole affair, and throw dust on the Christians.<sup>58</sup> It is only with the help of the local Muslim leader and an escort of armed guards that Nicholas may process through the town, at which point the Jews and "Pagans" exclaim, "Your impiety makes you deserving of accompanying your leader with clubs rather than the cross, readings and offices!"<sup>59</sup>

Michael makes clear his censure of the division which beset the Greek Orthodox, i.e. "Chalcedonian" church, noting that it caused "ignominy" among the bishops. Yet the disapproval of the Jews and Muslims, first indicated by their mockery and dust-throwing, and then later by their explicit accusation of insufficient piety on the part of Nicholas and his followers become the ultimate and most shameful sign of the spiritual failure of the patriarchal candidate, and indeed of this entire Christian community. The Jews and Muslims, rather than the Christians, note that Nicholas is not accompanied by the customary symbolic regalia and welcome befitting his office, and it is their judgment of the Christian ritual which Michael uses to signal the illegitimacy of the procession, and a patriarch who required external force to impose his authority. While there is no question, in any of these examples, of Muslims or Jews converting or becoming part of

**58** Michael I, the Syrian, *Chronique*, III. Livre XII, chap. X, p. 98. He is presumably speaking of Nicholas I (846–868 CE), since he mentions that the context was over who to succeed the patriarch Job (813–844 CE).

**59** Michael I, the Syrian, *Chronique*, III. Livre XII, chap. X, p. 99.

the community per se, nevertheless, as outsiders their celebration or condemnation of a given religious leader serve as a witness to their righteousness.

Such mixed audiences were also potentially dangerous. In describing the accession of the Coptic patriarch, the author of this section of the *History of the Patriarchs*, also noted that some Muslims protested that such a Christian display was unseemly. Even in this case the participants in the procession, whether Christian, Jew, or Muslim, play additional, essential roles. First, the size and diversity of the crowd of admirers protects the patriarch against disapproving Muslims who sought to turn the situation to violence. Additionally, the patriarch places the responsibility for these signs of respect and display of crosses on to them, rather than himself, making Muslims—wittingly or otherwise—and Jews, along with the Christians in the crowd, agents of Christian empowerment. The sultan accepts this and provides protection for the patriarch with his own men, thus allying himself with the Christian community against his own.<sup>60</sup>

In all of these instances, the concept of other as witness to the rightness of a given festival, or individual leader is intertwined with politics. Al-Kāmil's beneficent interaction with the Christians and their approbation of him, mark this Muslim leader not only as religiously virtuous but as a legitimate ruler in Christian, and by extension, God's eyes. Similarly, honour given to Christian leaders, by not only Muslims but also Jews, singles them out as extraordinary in their devotion and affirms their legitimacy, even as the failure to gain such praise simultaneously calls into question their religious and political credibility. In Western Christian and Jewish writings, the presence of the religious other served as further witness to the power and legitimacy of Christianity or Judaism, or more particularly a specific, usually dead, saint. In Western texts, as we have seen, Jewish and Christian authors accorded primacy or honour to *Muslim* participants in "their"—Jewish or Christian, depending on the affiliation of the writer—festivals and veneration of their sacred dead. When European Jews and Christians bothered to note the presence of one another at such events, the imagined context was one of force and violence. By contrast, in these Eastern Christian examples, Jewish participation is celebrated equally with that of the Muslims. Additionally, in the Western Christian and Jewish narratives, the holy dead functioned to reaffirm true spiritual power in the face of lost social and political ability to publicly display devotion or even access holy sites. By contrast, among Christians under Muslim rule, recognition by the religious other was as much an affair of the holy living, as of the very special dead.

Which is not to say that the holy dead were devoid of power or shy of intervening. Other descriptions of Muslim witnessing of Christian truth were rather more dramatically miraculous. For example, during the crusades, according to the narrative of one Coptic priest recorded in the *History of the Patriarchs*, an enthroned figure appears above the altar, who douses a second figure standing before him with incense. Flames rise from the censor, and suddenly at the back of the dome, riders, resembling the pictures of saints within the churches appear. As they ride past the throne they greet the figure and then disappear at the moment of the sacrifice (Eucharist). Similar visions had appeared in a number of churches, including the Church of the Martyr Abu Ḥinnis (John)

60 HOCP vol. 4, pt. 1, *Cyril III, Ibn Lakak 1216–1243*, Arabic, 67–69, English, 141–44.

at Shubrā-l-Khīmah. “And the Muslim inhabitants of the town testified to all of this.”<sup>61</sup> The priest has a further vision in which he is told to go to the leader of the crusaders and command him to inform the local Christians not to fear, since they have come to avenge them (the Copts) of their enemies, and to assure them that they will be able to remain in their churches according to their law (سنتهم *sunnatihim*).<sup>62</sup>

The Muslims in this account function to verify an extraordinary event, namely a Christian, public vision, with seemingly eschatological, or at least prophetic import. Their testimony adds veracity both because they are simultaneously neighbours of the Christians—which is to say, members of the local, geographically unified community—and outsiders, i.e. non-Christians. The choice to place the Eucharist as a central element within these visions, links the narrative to a long-standing tradition of Eucharistic miracles featuring unbelievers of various sorts, whether “heretics”, “Pagans,” Jews, or Muslims. Unlike the early Byzantine Orthodox hagiographies analyzed by Ildikó Csepregi, however, the point of this miracle is not to force the seer into taking the Eucharistic according to Byzantine doctrine or understanding (or in this case, Coptic), and thereby convert.<sup>63</sup> Rather, the Eucharist serves to mark a turning point within the vision and as confirmation of its sanctified source. The Muslims do not need to convert; they are more valuable as an external, non-Christian, confirmation of the truth of the priest’s report.

The full context of the passage also implies that the Muslims are witnesses to a prophecy of their own destruction, since a vision by the same priest is also intended to instruct the crusader leader to reassure the local Christians that crusaders will not attack them (the Copts), only their enemies, presumably the Muslims, or force the Copts to change their way of observing Christianity. Apocalyptic prophecies of conquest and Muslim demise were rife among Byzantine and Latin Christians and among Muslims during the crusades up through the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, including suggestions that the Muslims themselves knew of these prophecies.<sup>64</sup> Yet the true focus of concern in this particular passage appears to have been to provide assurances, and, if the priest did as he was instructed, divine pressure that the crusaders behave in a helpful, non-destructive fashion toward the Coptic Christians. Based on other comments within the *History of the Patriarchs*, such beneficent behaviour was far from assured. Indeed, Coptic attitudes toward the crusaders seems to have been mostly hostile and fearful.<sup>65</sup>

61 *و كل ذلك يشهد به المسلمون اهل البلاد*; HOCP vol. 4, pt. 1, *Cyril III, Ibn Lakak 1216–1243*, Arabic, 22–23, citation on 23; English, 48–49.

62 HOCP vol. 4, pt. 1, *Cyril III, Ibn Lakak 1216–1243*, Arabic, 23–24, English, 49.

63 Csepregi, “The Theological Other”; Csepregi, “Mysteries for the Uninitiated.” Also see more generally, Perczel, Forrai, and Geréby, eds. *The Eucharist in Theology and Philosophy*. My thanks to Prof. Istvan Perczel of Central European University for pointing out these references to me, and to Dr. Zaroui Pogossaan of the University of Florence for alerting me to the topos in Eastern Christian narratives.

64 Oliver of Paderborn, *Capture of Damietta*; Knobler, *Mythology and Diplomacy*, 31–35; Heng, *Empire of Magic*, 451–52; Setton, *Western Hostility to Islam*.

65 HOCP vol. 3, pt. 1 *Macarius II–John V 1102–1167*, Arabic, 22, English, 35; HOCP vol. 2, pt. 3 *Christodoulos–Michael 1046–1102*, Arabic, 249, English, 398–99; HOCP vol. 3, pt. 2 *Mark III–John VI 1167–1216*, Arabic, 62–63, 73–74, English, 104–5, 124–27.

Like their western counterparts, Christian authors in Egypt and the Levant eagerly recounted instances of punishments which disrespectful Muslims incurred at the hands of angry saints. Very often, vengeance was enacted as a result of Muslim disrespect or attempted destruction of holy images, objects, churches, or their caretakers. For example, when the son of the Christian doorkeeper of a church in Gizah dedicated to the martyr, Mārī Buqṭur, “my lord Victor,” rubs an icon of the martyr with a brick and requests the martyr’s intervention against the disrespectful muezzin who regularly bothered his father, the offending Muslim is struck with a shaking sickness. Recognizing that he has incurred the wrath of the martyr to whom the church is dedicated, the muezzin regularly cried out that he (the martyr) had come to punish him. Finally, he requests the help of the bishop of the church, Abba Hezekiah, to help him. Hezekiah prays before the image on behalf of the suffering Muslim, and intercedes with the martyr. The symptoms are alleviated for a time and then the muezzin dies.<sup>66</sup> Thus the power of the Christian martyr to both punish and to heal are affirmed, as is the intercessory power of the bishop. In the end, however, the Muslim’s disrespect is not tolerated, and vengeance prevails. Such descriptions of Muslim encounters with places and objects considered holy by Christians follow patterns extant in Byzantine and later Western narratives in that the miracles conducted for the non-Christians, usually Jews, lead to their recognition of the truth and sanctity of Christian space, object, or ritual, or to their punishment and death for disrespectfully violating what the Christians held sacred.<sup>67</sup>

### Religious Other as Witness and Competition among Jews under Muslim Rule

Analyzing differences in attitude between Eastern Jewish sources and Western Jewish texts is complicated by the fact that many of the Jewish sources from Egypt and the Levant are late, and for some of them, it is difficult to discern whether they were written by Jews who were native to the area or were immigrants from Europe.<sup>68</sup> That said, Jewish authors from the Middle East follow much the same pattern as that which may be found in Ibn Saʿīd’s chronicle and in Western Jewish travellers, namely, they remark with pleasure, or at least without censure, the presence of Muslims at the gravesites of prophets and the special dead. One exception to this tendency is a poetic pilgrimage narrative, which Joshua Prawer has argued dates from the twelfth century and was written by a Mizraḥi Jew. The author, given as “Yinaḥesh b. ha-Ḥaver,” does not so much describe the presence of Christians or Muslims as lament the sinfulness and presence of idols at Jewish holy places.<sup>69</sup> In contrast to Marmorstein, who maintained that the writer was objecting to Muslim occupation of Jewish holy sites, Prawer took the refer-

<sup>66</sup> HOCP vol. 2, pt. 3 *Christodoulus-Michael 1046–1102*, Arabic, 187, English, 285–86.

<sup>67</sup> Aron-Beller, “Byzantine Tales of Jewish Image Desecration”; Csepregi, “Mysteries for the Uninitiated”; Déroche, “Regards croisés des hérésiologues”; Rubin, *Gentile Tales*.

<sup>68</sup> For example, see the discussion of the text comprised of TS K 21 69, TS AR 49 64 and TS AS 75.25: Ilan, *Graves of the Righteous*, 85.

<sup>69</sup> Marmorstein, “Graves of the Fathers” 34, line 3, 35, lines 4–6, 39, lines. 1, 5; Prawer, *The History*

ence to an idol (ʿelil אֵלִיל) as proof that the author was speaking of crusader-occupied Palestine, when many of the sites holy to Jews, Christians, and Muslims were taken over and turned into Christian shrines, which would have included statues of saints. Such a practice would have been as abhorrent to Muslims as it was to the Jewish author of this text.<sup>70</sup> In either case, this particular account is striking in that there is no positive aspect of non-Jewish presence at Jewish holy sites; it is not even an occasion for God or the holy dead to demonstrate their power. Rather, the presence and religious symbols of non-Jews at places deemed sacred by Jews are solely a source of grief and distress, although not to the point of having prevented this Jewish pilgrim from visiting them. In this specific instance, Kedar’s “inegalitarian convergence” and Hayden’s concept of antagonistic tolerance describe Yinaḥesh’s sentiment in face of the unequal power relations that dictated the access and markings of holy places.<sup>71</sup> Assuming that Praver’s identification and dating are correct, the hostility and distress expressed by the poet may be indicative of the negative reaction by at least one local Jew to Western Christian control over Jerusalem and other key territories. Such a response follows the overall tendency noted by Brendan Goldman, for the Jews living in “*al-Shām*” to see Crusaders, or other invading forces, such as the Seljuqs, as a source of misfortune and to pray for the success of local Muslim rulers’ efforts to expel them.<sup>72</sup> It also accords with the tendency by both Jews from Western Europe and, as we shall see, Islamic lands, to portray Christians more negatively than Muslims or to ignore them.

In most such narratives, however, veneration by religious outsiders remained a source of pride, and the holy Jewish dead retained their power to attract and, when necessary, punish them. In one text by an Egyptian Jew, Yitgaddal, which Martin Jacobs dates to the fourteenth-century based on internal evidence, the author mostly notes at various points in his itinerary that Muslims honoured a given place. At the grave of Hulda the prophetess, he indicates that Muslims honour it very much and light lamps there.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, at a well of sweet water, whose blessing Yitgaddal claims is connected to King David, Muslims come to pray.<sup>74</sup> One sixteenth-century author comments about Hebron

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*of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, 176–77.* Marmorstein wavered between identifying the text as Sephardi or Mizraḥi based on paleographic evidence. See “Graves of the Fathers” 32.

**70** Praver, *The History of the Jews of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, 176–84*; Marmorstein, “Graves of the Fathers.”

**71** The author says that the “graves of the kings” are closed. Marmorstein, “Graves of the Fathers,” 35, line 7.

**72** Goldman, “Arabic-Speaking Jews in Crusader Syria,” 32–42, 44–48, 51–52, although see the discussion of a poem describing Frankish losses as a result of the Nile’s flooding and Ayyubid victory against them, 141–43, which Goldman argues expresses sympathy for the suffering of the Christians even as it portrays that suffering as resulting from divine punishment. On the Jewish practice of praying for Muslim leaders more generally, see Goitein, “Prayers from the Geniza.”

**73** Ilan, *Graves of the Righteous*, 133, line 10; Jacobs, *Reorienting the East*, 27. Also see Ilan’s discussion of this source, *Graves of the Righteous*, 131–32.

**74** Ilan, *Graves of the Righteous*, 135, lines 35–36.

(al-Khalil) that the Muslims come to pray with “purity and cleanness.”<sup>75</sup> In another anonymous fourteenth-century text from the Cairo Geniza, cobbled together from several fragments, Muslims pray at, among others, the grave of Rabban Gamliel, a figure from right after the destruction of the Second Temple.<sup>76</sup> In fact, Rabban Gamliel’s tomb was considered to be the burial site of one of the Prophet Muḥammad’s companions, Abū Hureira.<sup>77</sup> The anonymous Jewish author says nothing of the competing claims of who lay buried there, rather he claims the Muslim devotees for the Jewish sage. Mention of Christians is more difficult to discern, since the texts use the term *goyim*, which may refer to any kind of non-Jew, including Christians, but also Muslims. In this particular text, given that the author so carefully demarcates Muslims as “*Ishm’a’elim*”, his one reference to *goyim* praying at a water source probably refers to Christians.<sup>78</sup> Unlike Muslims, Christians are not portrayed positively. The text is somewhat broken at this point, however, it seems to say: “One does not curse the Christians in their blindness.”<sup>79</sup>

While notices of Muslims praying at graves and other sites also revered by Jews was frequently remarked upon with pleasure, Jews often noted when a place was occupied by Muslims and Jews were either not granted access or had to pay.<sup>80</sup> Some authors made the issue of subservience of Muslims to Jews very explicit, such as in an early seventeenth-century letter from Safed:

The Gentiles who dwell in the land of Israel, all of them are yielding and subordinate before the holiness of Israel, and even if we are standing for the whole day in a field in *ṭalit* and in *tafilin* and are praying and calling out in a loud voice “Adonai Eloheinu” before the graves of the righteous (*ha-zadiqim*) not one is found among the Gentiles who would conceive in his heart to oppress the status of the Jews in the place where they pray or [who] would open his mouth to mock the prayer...on the contrary they conduct [themselves] with great holiness at the graves of the holy *tana'im* and at the shrines (or: “synagogues”) and they light candles over the graves of the righteous.<sup>81</sup>

**75** Ilan, *Graves of the Righteous*, 153. On this text see 145–52.

**76** Ilan, *Graves of the Righteous*, 96, ‘*amud* 6, lines 9–11. On this text see 85–93. For other instances of Muslim veneration of Jewish sites in this itinerary see 95, ‘*amud* 5, line 1, p. 96, ‘*amud* 7, line 1, p. ‘*amud* 9, l.7.

**77** Fischer and Taxel, “Ancient Yavneh,” esp. 249–50, 260–62.

**78** Ilan, *Graves of the Righteous*, 96, ‘*amud* 7, line 9. Also see Ilan’s remarks, 106n126.

**79** Ilan, *Graves of the Righteous*, 98, ‘*amud* 8, lines 13–14.

**80** Ilan, *Graves of the Righteous*, 95, ‘*amud* 4, line 15, ‘*amud* 5, lines 1–2, 96, ‘*amud* 5, 8–10, p. 98, ‘*amud* 8, lines 8–9, 133 lines 9–10, 172, daf 16.

**81** והגויים היושבים על אדמת ישראל, כולם הם נכנעים וכפופים לפני קדושתן של ישראל, ואפילו שאנחנו עומדים כל היום כלו על השדה בטלית ובתפילין ומתפללים וקוראים בקול גדול ה אלהינו לפני קברות הצדיקים, לא נמצא אחד מהגויים שיערב אל לבו לגשת לפני מעמד היהודים במקום שהם מתפללים, או שיפתחו פיהם ללעג אל התפילה ... ואדרבה הם נוהגים קדושה גדולה בקברות התנאים הקדושים ובבתי הכנסיות והם דולקים נרות על קברות הצדיקים *Iggarot ‘Erez Yisra’el*, 199; Ilan, *Graves of the Righteous*, 77.

This particular writer (R. Shalmav Shlomil of Yanstrel) repeatedly emphasizes the subjection of the non-Jews within the land of Israel. In Ottoman Palestine, as under previous Muslim rulers, non-Muslims were not supposed to be publicly loud or obvious about their worship practices.<sup>82</sup> Like Petachia's tale of the Sultan restoring the grave of R. Meir, discussed earlier, this author's boast that the Jews could stand in a field, dressed in full prayer regalia and pray in a loud voice without fear of repercussions demonstrated Jews' (and God's) ability to defy Muslim laws designed to signal Jews' subordination, at least while Jews were engaged in holy activities or near the graves of the righteous. While R. Shalmav does not specify that the "Gentiles" (*goyim*) are Muslim, because these Gentiles have the potential power to oppress the Jews, it seems probable that they were Muslims rather than Christians, who would not have had any authority over the Jewish population.<sup>83</sup> Assuming that the "*goyim*" were Muslims, despite their "subordination," their veneration of holy gravesites is not only tolerated, but is seemingly expected, again creating a place within the Jewish community. This "place" remains a liminal one, for the Muslims in all of these texts do not become in any way "Jewish" yet they are very much part of the community of devotees of the Jewish holy dead. The question of conversion is never raised, either because Jews knew enough about the political and religious situation in the Middle East that such a detail would be too incredible, or, as I would suggest, because Muslims needed to remain Muslims in these stories because their very otherness is what lent power to the Jewish rituals, holy sites, and saints in these texts.

Interreligious encounters with living holy wo/men as recounted in Jewish chronicles, letters, autobiographies, and hagiographies from the Islamic world, however, reveal a more ambiguous notion of ties between religious truth, power, and affiliation. According to these texts, claimants to special, sanctified status and powers attracted clients from multiple religious communities. Such narratives suggest that Jewish, Christian, and Muslim holy wo/men potentially competed with one another, although there are also indications that they worked together. In the instances I have found, however, the question of conversion is rarely raised, in contrast to similar tales by Muslim authors discussed in the next section.

A number of scholars have chronicled Jewish interest in Sufism and the movement to appropriate elements of Sufi practice into Jewish ritual, spearheaded in large part by Abraham Maimonides and his successors.<sup>84</sup> Not all Jews contented themselves with

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**82** Palestine and Egypt came under Ottoman control in 1517. On religious noise as an issue of contention, see Cuffel, "Seductive Sounds"; Jaspert, "Zeichen und Symbole"; Constable, "Regulating Noise". On the status and situation of Jews and other minorities under Ottoman rule generally see David, *To Come to the Land*, 48–53; Greene, *A Shared World*, 82–87, 93–109; Philipp, "Jews and Arab Christians"; Cohen, "Sixteenth Century Egypt and Palestine."

**83** On the status of Jews in Ottoman Safed see David, *To Come to the Land*, 95–99.

**84** Russ-Fishbane, *Judaism, Sufism, and Pietests*; Fenton, "La pratique de la retraite spirituelle"; Fenton, "Juifs et soufis en Égypte mamelouke"; Fenton, "Abraham Maimonides (1186–1237)"; Fenton, "Judaic-Arabic mystical writings of the XIIIth–XIVth centuries," Loubet, "Le courant mystique juif soufi"; Loubet, "Le Piétisme soufi chez les Juifs d'Égypte au Moyen Age"; Goitein, "Abraham Maimonides and his Pietist Circle." This is a selection of the relevant scholarship; the bibliography on this topic is too vast to cite comprehensively.

the Jewish adaptation of Sufism, however. In at least one instance a Jewish man, one Baṣīr, was entranced by the teachings of Yūsuf al-ʿAjāmī al-Kūrānī (d. 1367 CE), a Sufi who had a *zāwīyya* for teaching other mystics in the cemetery east of Cairo, al-Qarāfa al-Ṣuḡhrā.<sup>85</sup> Evidently Baṣīr did not merely attend himself, he wished to take his family to join the shaykh's circle there, after they had sold their home. We know of this incident courtesy of the letter from Baṣīr's wife asking the Nagīd David II (David b. Joshua Maimonides) (active c. 1335–1410 CE) to attempt to convince her husband to abandon the Sufi retreat on the mountain in favour of attending the synagogue regularly.<sup>86</sup> A couple of elements of the letter are worth highlighting. The wife says Baṣīr mixes with “the poor ones” (*al-faqrā'* אַלפִּקְרָא) who have the appearance (*dhāhir* נֹאֵהָר) but not the internal (*bāṭin* בְּאֵטָן) or “essence”, on the mountain, where there is “no recollection of the Name of God in truth” (לֹא זְכִירַת הַשֵּׁם עַל הָאֵמֶת).<sup>87</sup> Her selection of elements to discredit as having the appearance of piety without the substance or truth of it, point to those which her husband found attractive: the Sufis' poverty and the practice of recalling (*dhikr*) God's name. “She feared that it would come to pass therefore (that) a bad man would advise him (away from) the religion (Judaism) and the three children would be induced.”<sup>88</sup> Although that is her fear, it is worth noting that her husband had evidently been studying with al-Kūrānī for some time and *not* converted to Islam. Furthermore, it seems that no objections had been raised by al-Kūrānī or his Muslim followers against a Jewish man and his family entering the *zāwīyya*.

Evidence of Jewish attraction to and consultation with individual Muslim shaykhs, or, more rarely, Christian holy men, and willingness on the part of these non-Jewish figures to cooperate with Jewish clients increases during the Ottoman period. In his autobiography, the kabbalist Ḥayyim Vital (1542–1620 CE) describes turning to Shaykh Ibn Ayyub for assistance with a number of ailments which Vital attributes to demonic affliction. That Ibn Ayyub is recognized as a holy man and healer is evident from the large crowd of followers and petitioners attending him during Ḥayyim Vital's arrival. Vital's convoluted and self-aggrandizing account of the incident ends with Ibn Ayyub's demonic servants fleeing, and Ibn Ayyub doing obeisance to Vital in recognition of the latter's superior

**85** On the al-Qarāfa al-Ṣuḡhrā and its “mountain” as a place of pilgrimage and meeting ground for Sufis see al-Ibrashy, “Cairo's Qarafa”; Ohtoshi, “Tasawwuf as Reflected in *Ziyāra* Books”; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 15–61.

**86** Goitein, “A Jewish Addict to Sufism.” For an account of al-Kūrānī, though without reference to any Jewish followers, see al-Sha'rānī, *Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, no. 316, p. 374–75. David b. Joshua was himself very much engaged in mystical speculation connected with the so-called “Jewish Sufi” movement, which is perhaps part of why the author of the letter hoped he might dissuade her husband from frequenting a Muslim *zawīyya*. On David's mystical writing see Fenton, “A Mystical Commentary”; Fenton, “The Literary Legacy of David ben Joshua.”

**87** Goitein, “A Jewish Addict to Sufism,” lines 10 and 9, pp.46–47, 48.

**88** תכשי אין יחצל תם אדם רע יוצאי אותו מן הדת ותצאי אלשלה ילדים; Goitein, “A Jewish Addict to Sufism,” line 11, p. 47. The letter is written at the time when Mamluk law (1354 CE) changed and required the entire family of a willing convert to Islam to also convert. Previously, single generation conversions were fairly common, even in cases where minor children in theory would have been obligated to convert. El-Leithy, “Coptic Culture and Conversion in Medieval Cairo” 1:67–100, especially 96.

sanctity.<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, before this point, Vital states, “I asked him for an incantation, as is the custom.”<sup>90</sup> The phrase “as is the custom” indicates not only that Vital was familiar with the proper manner of approaching a Muslim shaykh for aid, but that such knowledge was common, seemingly among Jews as well as Muslims. Much like Jewish (and Christian) accounts of Muslims revering the non-Muslim holy dead (willingly or otherwise) or attending Jewish (or Christian) religious ceremonies, Vital’s narrative emphasizes the superior status of the Jewish holy figure (himself) and subverts the customary Muslim–*dhimmi* hierarchy.<sup>91</sup> These rhetorical flourishes also serve to disparage a rival who performs the same function within the Muslim (and seemingly also within the Jewish) community to which Ḥayyim Vital himself aspires. Vital’s autobiography and his treatise on the transmigration of souls contain other instances in which Jews turn to a Muslim or possibly Christian specialist in divination or exorcism. Vital’s dismissiveness as to the effectiveness of these non-Jewish sages is as much a reflection of their status as competitors as it is of interreligious polemic. Vital’s own son, is among those who seeks out help from a Muslim cleric.<sup>92</sup> Unlike Baṣīr, from the Mamluk era, Vital and his co-religionists did not seek out Muslim shaykhs for their teachings or demonstrations of piety, but rather for their skills in manipulating the supernatural world.<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, both sets of sources make clear that Jews were attracted to Muslim holy men and portray the latter as accepting Jews into their circle of adherents without objection.

From the Ottoman era, the Egyptian Jewish chronicler, Joseph b. Isaac Sambari (ca. 1640–1703 CE) incorporated both narratives of political events and more hagiographically oriented accounts of Jewish figures in Egypt and Palestine.<sup>94</sup> Two such examples from the chronicle feature the interactions of a Jewish holy man, one R. Jacob Goiozo, with Muslims on the one hand, and a wonder-working competition between a rabbi and a Christian named Girgis on the other. R. Goiozo wanders from place to place and is sought out by Jews and Muslims alike: “And the Muslims of the people of the villages blessed him, saying that he was a pure man and from his blessing they were blessed.”<sup>95</sup> As in the examples of Jews and Muslims joining in processions for the Coptic Patriarch discussed earlier, the fact that Muslims revere him is further testimony to his sanc-

**89** Vital, *Sefer ha-Hezyonot*, 54; Vital, *Book of Visions*, 51–52; Cuffel, “From Geographical Migration to Transmigration of Souls.”

**90** ואז שאלתי ממנו בלחש, כמנהג; Vital, *Sefer ha-Hezyonot*, 54; Vital, *Book of Visions*, 51.

**91** Cuffel, “From Geographical Migration to Transmigration of Souls.”

**92** Vital, *Sefer ha-Hezyonot*, 55, 58; Vital, *Book of Visions*, 52, 57; Vital, *Sha’ar ha-Gilgulim*, “*Ma’aseh shel ha-ruaḥ*,” 186; Cuffel, “From Geographical Migration to Transmigration of Souls”; Cuffel, “Gendered Visions”; Faierstein, “*Maggidim*, Spirits, and Women”; Chajes, *Between Two Worlds*, 104–13, 160–78.

**93** Although as Goitein and the sixteenth-century Muslim biographer, al-Shar’ānī, make clear, al-Kūrānī possessed ample miraculous abilities of his own. Goitein, “A Jewish Addict to Sufism”; al-Sha’rānī, *Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, no. 316, pp. 374–75.

**94** Jacobs, *Islamische Geschichte in jüdischen Chroniken*, 109–27, 221–58.

**95** והישמעאלים של אנשי הכפרים מתברכים בו לאמר שהוא איש תם ומברכתו היו מתברכים; Joseph b. Isaac Sambari, *Sefer Divrei Josef*, 363.

tity. While R. Goizo is somewhat less considerate of Muslims—he allows thieves who demand his blessing to rob Muslims and Christians but not Jews—this act of discrimination is minimal in comparison to the fate of Girgis. The Christian is defamed as impure and a magician, and he is buried alive after losing the supernatural contest. Sambari rejoices, saying “Thus may all of your enemies perish, God,” and notes that Christians continue to use the place where Girgis died as a church.<sup>96</sup> By describing them as doing so, Sambari denigrates the Christian community as a whole, since they venerate a dead, failed wonder-worker, in contrast to the Jews’ more successful champion.<sup>97</sup> This highly negative treatment of Christians as opposed to Muslims in a Jewish narrative recalls Jacob ha-Cohen description of the holy Jewish dead punishing crusaders in Palestine analyzed in chapter two. Yet unlike in Cohen’s account, the battle is portrayed as being between living representatives of the Christian and Jewish communities. Despite the thematic echoes between Girgis and Jesus in the legendary *Toledot Yeshu*, the Jewish life of Jesus, where Jesus also is an impure magician doing battle with rabbis, in the context of Sambari’s chronicle, the competition between *living* Jewish and Christian holy men is brought to the fore; Jews are no longer entirely dependent on the holy dead to assert the “true” religious hierarchy.<sup>98</sup>

### Curious Encounters: Shared Holy People and Places in Muslim Hagiography and Travel Narratives.

Curiosity and the urge toward tourism have, perhaps, been underestimated as forces behind instances of “shared” sites and holy figures. Scholars have explored curiosity as an element in late medieval and early modern Western travel narratives, however, the urge to see the unfamiliar or beautiful also comes to the fore in many the Muslim travel narratives discussed below.<sup>99</sup> Whereas Christians and Jews exalted in the presence of the Muslim other at their religious sites, in Muslim travel accounts and pilgrimage guides there is a tension between ascertaining the truth about the legends regarding specific sites, recording what was beautiful or strange about the religious spaces and rituals of other communities, yet confirming the truth of Islam. Events, such as the crusades, which at times upset what Muslims understood to be the proper hierarchy and claims to religious spaces, required stronger responses, and more pointed, direct polemical

**96** כן יאבדו כל אויביו ה'; Joseph b. Isaac Sambari, *Sefer Diverei Josef*, 373. The whole story is on 371–73. Compare with al-Qushayrī, *Risalah al-Qushayriyah*, 2:686–87; al-Qushayrī, *Das Sendschreiben al-Qushayris*, 502.

**97** Cuffel, “From Geographical Migration to Transmigration of Souls.”

**98** Versions of the *Toledot Yeshu* were widespread in the Middle East in both Judeo-Arabic and Hebrew, as well as being known in Europe. See Meerson and Schäfer, ed. and transl., *Toledot Yeshu: The Life Story of Jesus*; Goldstein, “Jesus in Arabic”; Goldstein, “A Polemical Tale”; Goldstein, “Judeo-Arabic Versions”; Goldstein, *A Judeo-Arabic Parody*; Barbu and Deutsch, *Toledoth Yeshu in Context*; Cuffel, “Between Epic Entertainment and Polemical Exegesis”; *Toledot Yeshu* (“The Life Story of Jesus”) *Revisited*.

**99** On curiosity in medieval and early modern European narratives see, for example, Williams, *Pilgrimage and Narrative*, 27, 56–57, 71–77, 90–93, 114–15, 137–38, 141, 256–57.

engagement with the religious other, specifically, Christians. Yet in hagiographical texts, the ability of a Sufi or other type of holy person to draw non-Muslims was frequently presented as evidence and an enhancement to his/her sanctified status.

### **Outwitting Tricksters and Converting with Kindness: Tales of Encounters between Muslim Holy Wo/men and *Dhimmi***

Throughout the medieval Islamic world, *ṭabaqāt* or books of *manāqib* (virtues) of Sufis abound with tales of encounter between Sufis or “proto-Sufis” and *dhimmi*. These encounters fall into a number of patterns. One early pattern is that a member of a *dhimmi* community—usually a man—comes to listen to or consult a shaykh without revealing that he is not a Muslim. The revelation of the supplicant’s true identity by the shaykh, his animals or other elements of the natural world around him/her is interpreted as a miracle which redounds to the shaykh’s reputation as a powerful person of God. Usually, though not always, the non-Muslim converts to Islam.<sup>100</sup> Sometimes this only occurs after s/he is often shamed in some way, as in the account of Shaykh Zurbihān’s cat, who refused to acknowledge one of the forty-one guests who had come to visit Shaykh Zurbihān. When challenged, the cat leaped on the visitor’s head and urinated on him. This visitor turned out to be a Christian who had long been among the companions of the shaykh, and whose non-Muslim identity had only been uncovered that day. The sullied Christian then converts to Islam by the hand of the shaykh.<sup>101</sup>

Tales such as this one, of disguised *dhimmis* seeking to trick or ingratiate themselves into a Muslim holy person’s circle, on the one hand imbued *dhimmis* with an aura of deviousness, dishonesty, and threat, while at the same time confirming the Sufi master’s knowledge and control over this element of the population. Narratives depicting Muslim holy people engaging in miracle contests with their *dhimmi* counterparts, performing military miracles, or who inflict miraculous punishments on disrespectful *dhimmi*, served much the same function.<sup>102</sup> This anxiety and inclination to depict the *ahl l-kitāb* in a negative light, may reflect the increased concern during the Mamluk period to regulate *dhimmis* and periodic outbreaks of violence against *dhimmis* and their religious buildings, often led by Sufis.<sup>103</sup> At the same time, such tales also point to the possibility or fear

**100** al-Yāfi’ī, *Kitāb Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, 101, 178; al-Qushayrī, *Risalah al-Qushayriyah*, 2:490, 493; al-Qushayrī, *Das Sendschreiben al-Quṣayrīs*, 334, 336; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Kitāb al-kawākib*, 224–25, 259; Al-Sakhāwī, *Tuḥfat*, 357; Abū l-Qāsim al-Labīdī, *Manāqib d’Abū Ishāq al-Jabanyānī*, Arabic, 74, French, 261; Mojaddedi, *The Biographical Tradition in Sufism*, 160–62; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 119, 141.

**101** Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Kitāb al-kawākib*, 224–25; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 141.

**102** Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Kitāb al-kawākib*, 311; ‘Uthmān, *Murshid al-zuwwār*, 634–636; Ibn Zāfir, *Risāla de Ṣafī al-Dīn*, Arabic, 96–97, French, 201–2, Arabic fol. 127b–128a; al-Yāfi’ī, *Kitāb Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, 130; al-Qushayrī, *Risalah al-Qushayriyah*, 1:322, 2:683–84, 686–87; al-Qushayrī, *Das Sendschreiben al-Quṣayrīs*, 201, 499–500, 502; al-Sha’rānī, *Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, no. 299, p. 287; al-Sha’rānī, *Vite e detti*, 230; al-Munāwī, *Kawākib al-durriyah*, 4:532–33; Cecere, “The Shaykh and the Others”; Herrera, *Les maîtres soufis*, 273–281; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 118–20.

**103** Cecere, “The Shaykh and the Others”; Leithy, “Sufis, Copts and the Politics of Piety.”

that Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians *did* attend the study circles of Sufis, and did not always identify themselves openly. Nevertheless, the attendance of non-Muslims, and a Muslim holy person's ability to detect them, is depicted positively. For Muslim authors, the admiration of the religious other, a shaykh's ability to identify "hidden" non-Muslims, and that they would become Muslim "by the hand" of a given holy person emphasized both the power of that holy individual, and the correctness of the Muslim understanding of God.<sup>104</sup> Indeed, one of the clearest, direct statements about the value of the recognition of a person's holiness by non-Muslims comes from Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh al-Iskandarī's (1260–c. 1309 CE) biography of the Sufi master, Shaykh Abū Ḥasan al-Shadhilī (1196–1258 CE). It too shows approval at cross-religious reverence for a Muslim holy figure, while still expressing hostility toward the *dhimmi*. According to Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh, the shaykh was travelling through an area heavily populated by Muslims, yet none gave him shelter or anything to eat. When some Byzantine Christians encountered him, they exclaimed that he was a "priest" (*qissīs*) of the Muslims, and they gave him abundant provisions. When Abū Ḥasan exclaimed about receiving support from Christians rather than from his own co-religionists, a heavenly voice exclaimed: "The (spiritual) man is not the one championed/supported (*nuṣra*) by his friends! Truly the (spiritual) man is the one championed/supported by his enemies!"<sup>105</sup>

Not all or even most encounters between non-Muslims and shaykhs/shaykhahs depicted the non-Muslims as devious and barely tolerable. Tales portraying *dhimmi* clients of Muslim holy wo/men positively or neutrally, do end in conversion, however, either because of the Muslim holy person's exemplary conduct, a sermon given, a miracle, or, very often, an act of kindness by the Muslim to the non-Muslim.<sup>106</sup> One of the best examples of this phenomenon is associated with one al-Sayyida Nafīsa bint al-Ḥasan (762–824 CE), the great grand-daughter of Ḥasan, the Prophet Muḥammad's own grandson, who, according to her biographers, refused to leave Egypt to return to Arabia with her husband and became and remains one of the most revered holy women in Egypt.<sup>107</sup> Mamluk authors of *ṭabaqāt* collections, pilgrimage guides, and chronicles regularly included tales of her asceticism, pious behaviour, and miracles. Among these are two stories especially relevant for this discussion. In the first tale, a Jewish woman and her crippled daughter are living next door to Sayyida Nafīsa. The mother wishes to go out to the baths but does not know what to do with her daughter. The daughter replied:

**104** On the formula conversion "at the hand of the shaykh" as common in Muslim hagiographic texts see Cecere, "The Shaykh and the Others."

**105** ليس الرجل من نصر بأجابه انما الرجل من نصر بأعدائه; Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh al-Iskandarī, *Kitāb laṭā'if al-minan*, 60; Cecere, "The Shaykh and the Others." Accepting food from non-Muslims or other types of outsiders was clearly seen as problematic in this work, though such an offer was also an occasion for heavenly revelation and a sign of holiness. Compare with the story of Abū 'Abbas being offered food by a Christian (?) man from Alexandria (رجل من عدول الاسكندرية) on 55–56.

**106** Cecere, "The Shaykh and the Others"; Herrera, *Les maîtres soufis*, 268–94.

**107** Cuffel, "From Practice to Polemic"; Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*, 43, Hoffman, "Muslim Sainthood"; Ragib, "Al-Sayyida Nafisa."

“Oh mother, place me with that noble [*sharifa*] lady who lives next to us until you come back.” The mother came to al-Sayyida Nafisa and asked her for her permission about this. She granted it to her. She [the mother] brought [her daughter] to her and she laid her down in a corner of the house, and she left. Then came the time for the midday prayer and al-Sayyida Nafisa stood up and she performed the ritual ablutions next to the girl. The water spilled onto her and Allah inspired her to spread some of the water of the ablutions on her limbs and she was healed by the permission of Allah. She stood up and walked as if nothing was [wrong] with her. When her family came she went out to them walking. They asked what had happened. She told them and they converted to Islam.<sup>108</sup>

The early-thirteenth-century author of this version of the tale, Ibn Uthmān includes a more elaborate version of the same, in which emotions of wonder and gratitude of the parents for both the healing of their daughter and being led from religious error are described in greater detail. The fact that not only the girl and her parents, but many in the Jewish community also convert to Islam upon learning what had happened is also underscored. In the second story, the *dhimmi* wife of a Muslim man is distraught because their son is a prisoner of war. She asks her husband to request Nafisa’s intercession, promising “Then, if he comes, I will believe in her religion.”<sup>109</sup> The man tells the story to Sayyida Nafisa, who prays that God return the son. That night, there is a knocking on the door, and the *dhimmi* woman opens it to find her son returned to her. Overjoyed, she listens to his account of how his manacles dropped away because a mysterious voice announced that he should be freed because Sayyida Nafisa had pleaded for him, and then he was miraculously deposited at his parents’ doorstep. The mother spreads the news, and more than seventy people convert to Islam, as does the mother herself, and dedicates herself to the service of Sayyida Nafisa.<sup>110</sup>

Significantly, in both tales, the non-Muslims know of Sayyida Nafisa’s reputation and actively seek her out. The Jewish girl calls Nafisa “*sharifa*” which in addition to being a title of respect, recognizes Nafisa’s status as part of the family of the prophet. Thus, the *dhimmi* women acknowledge her not merely as a holy woman, but very particularly as a *Muslim* holy woman. Indeed, they enable their own miraculous intervention through Sayyida Nafisa’s *Baraka*, whereas Nafisa herself remains relatively passive. The water of Nafisa’s ablutions fall upon the crippled girl, who spreads them upon her own legs, and it is not clear whether Sayyida Nafisa asks for the son’s return on behalf of

**108** يا أمام، اجعليني عند هذه الشريفة التي بجوارنا حتى تعودى. فجاءت أمها الى السيدة نفيسة، وسألته و سألته و استأذنتها في ذلك، فأذنت لها، فأنت بها النهار، و وضعتها في جانب البيت، ومضت، فجاء وقت صلاة الظهر، فقامت السيدة نفيسة فتوضأت الى جانب الصبية، فجرى الماء اليها، فألهمها الله تعالى أن أخذت من ماء الوضوء و جعلت تمرّ به على أعضائها، فشفيت بادن الله تعالى، وقامت تمشى كأن لم يكن بها شيء، فلما جاء أهلها خرجت اليها تمشى، فسألوها عن شأنها، فأخبرتهم، فأسلموا; Uthmān, *Murshid al-zuwwār*, 163.

**109** فإذا جاء أمنت بدينها; Uthmān, *Murshid al-zuwwār*, 169.

**110** Uthmān, *Murshid al-zuwwār*. For other versions of one or both of these stories see Al-Sakhāwī, *Tuhfat*, 130–32; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *Kitāb al-kawākib*, 32; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 4:324–27; al-Munāwī, *Kawākib al-durrīyah*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 724–25. al-Sha’rānī also mentions her but gives the briefest of biographies and no miracles: *Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, 98.

the Muslim husband, or his *dhimmi* wife. These small details allowed the saint to hover between being an active patron of non-Muslim (women) and keeping distant from their unbelief. Yet in both cases, Sayyida Nafisa is portrayed as being willing to aid her non-Muslim neighbours, whether through small acts of hospitality or prayer. These are but two examples amid a number of tales of the kindness and miracles enacted by various Muslim holy figures on behalf of Jews, Christians, or Zoroastrians. Sometimes these stories are attributed to figures in the distant past, as in the case of Sayyida Nafisa, whereas others feature more contemporaneous figures.<sup>111</sup> Regardless of when the hero/ines of these accounts lived, during the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods their stories were read as *exempla* which firmly linked kindness to non-Muslims as a desirable attribute for all who aspired to sanctity. In most cases a Muslim shaykh/ah's courtesy and kindness results in the beneficiary's conversion to Islam, often with many of his/her co-religionists. However, at times the sole "reward" for such interreligious courtesy is divine approbation.<sup>112</sup> Indeed, God is depicted as chiding the Patriarch Abraham for refusing hospitality to a "Magian" (Zoroastrian) because he would not submit to God/convert to Islam. God reminds Abraham that He had been feeding the man for seventy years regardless of his unbelief, and Abraham is asked to feed him only one night. Abraham runs after the Zoroastrian to urge him to be his guest, recounting God's reprimand. The Zoroastrian converts to Islam.<sup>113</sup> Thus, much like in Western Christian hagiographies, the unbelievers were celebrated as members of the saint's circle, but the ideal end to such tales was conversion to the "correct" religion of those in power.

Much as in the Christian chronicles, the acclamation and love of many peoples and religious communities for a particular religious leader was a sign of great sanctity. At times, such accounts read as grandiose versions of the more modest conversion tales commonly connected to various Sufis and "proto-Sufis". This is the case of Ibn Ḥanbal's (780–855 CE) funeral, according to al-Sha'rānī (ca.1492–1565 CE). The population of Baghdad, eight hundred thousand men and sixty thousand women filled the streets and wept. "And on that day twenty thousand of the Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians became Muslim, may God, the Exalted be satisfied with him."<sup>114</sup> Other instances resemble Christian and Jewish accounts more closely in that conversion is not raised, rather the diversity of religious communities is a further point of glory for the holy person. Generally, such accounts also imply, if they do not state outright, that such interreligious

**111** For example Al-Sakhāwī, *Tuḥfat*, 249; Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh, *Durrat al-asrār*, 148; Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh, *Mystical Teachings of al-Shadhili*, 208–209; al-Sha'rānī, *Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, no. 329, p. 427; al-Sha'rānī, *Vite e detti*, 288. This last miracle, which is attributed to the poet Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Farghalī (d. ca. 1446 CE), is very similar to the one performed by Sayyida Nafisa at the behest of the *dhimmi* wife. In this case it is a Frankish Christian woman who believes in the shaykh and comes to him herself.

**112** Aflākī, *Feats of the Knowers of God*, 81–82

**113** al-Qushayrī, *Risalah al-Qushayriyah*, 1:321, 2:474; al-Qushayrī, *Das Sendschreiben al-Quṣayrīs*, 200, 321.

**114** *وأسلم يومئذ عشرون ألفاً من اليهود والنصارى والمجوس رضى الله تعالى عنه*; al-Sha'rānī, *Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, no. 94, p. 82; al-Sha'rānī, *Vite e detti*, 93.

devotion sprang from the charity and fair treatment on the part of the holy person. For example, the thirteenth-century shaykh and biographer, Ṣaḡī al-Dīn Ibn Abī l-Manṣūr recounts that Majd al-Dīn al-Akhmīmī (d. 1255 CE):

continued beautifully in gathering the hearts of all to him and he was very moral in his dealings with the needs of the people and participating with them as their conciliator for desires, likewise he dealt with the need of great and small, free and slave, Muslim and unbeliever therefore all the communities and religious groups loved him.<sup>115</sup>

Aflākī, the fourteenth-century biographer of the Persian poet, mystic, and legal scholar, Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī (1207–1273 CE) described Rūmī’s funeral as attended by multiple ethnicities and by Jews and Christians processing with their holy books. Muslims unsuccessfully attempted to drive them away. When the Sultan asked why they attended Rūmī’s funeral, they insisted he had helped them understand Moses and Jesus better and that they were his disciples.<sup>116</sup> Here non-Muslims are recognized, by the biographer and his subject at least, as part of the holy man’s community and allowed to retain their original religious affiliations, even if the general population of Muslims are less willing to accept such an ambiguous status. Tentatively, I would suggest that Muslim authors of *manāqib* texts, like Christian and Jewish authors, saw the veneration by the religious other as a powerful ratification of special, sanctified status, yet they were ill at ease with the idea that a Sufi circle’s numbers might be filled with insincere, curious onlookers from among the subjugated peoples. Creating a *topos* of clairvoyant shaykhs, able to see through *dhimmi*’s disguise and emphasizing (in most cases) the conversion of non-Muslims, allowed these authors lay claim to the prestige of the veneration of the religious other, while at the same time asserting at control, on a narrative level, over Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians whom they feared they could not see, and of whose motivations they were uncertain. Yet, while idle curiosity, prevarication, or observation from the periphery by those not belonging to the Muslim community discomfited authors of *ṭabaqāt*, Muslim travellers and pilgrims indulged in precisely such uncommitted observation of Christian and Jewish holy spaces and rituals.

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**115** استمرارا حسنا باجتماع قلوب الكافة عليه و كان حسن الاخلاق كثير المشى فى حوائج الناس و الدخول معهم فى مصالحهم مرغوبا  
لذلك يمشى فى حاجة الكبير و الصغير و الحر و العبد و المسلم و الكافر تحبه سائر الطوائف و الملل  
Ibn Zāfir, *Risāla de Ṣaḡī al-Dīn*, Arabic, 68, French, 164, Arabic fol. 97a–98b. On this text and passage see Cecere, “The Shaykh and the Others,” esp. 53–55.

**116** Aflākī, *Feats of the Knowers of God*, 405–406. On this text and its treatment of non-Muslim devotees of Rūmī, see Küçüküseyin, “Conversion Reports.” Of course, the behaviour and attitudes expressed in this work reflect inter-religious attitudes current in Central Asia and Iran, rather than the Mediterranean regions. A systematic examination of the interchanges, similarities, or differences between shared practices and inter-religious relations between the two regions has yet to be undertaken.

## Muslim Acceptance of / or Presence at Shrines and Festivals of Christians and Jews

The Muslim geographer, physician, and astronomer al-Qazwini (1203–1283) recounted the following about a church in the village of Ashab al-Ukhdu in the Hawran near Damascus:

It contains a giant church [*bīa*] still in use, of fine construction built upon marble pillars and ornamented with mosaics. It is called al-Najran. Muslims and Christians make votive offerings to it. They said that votive offerings [*nadhr*] to it are tried and proven. A group travels throughout the lands on horseback to collect votive offerings to it, crying aloud: “Who will make a votive offering to Blessed Najran?” The Sultan has assigned a gift for it which they convey every year.<sup>117</sup>

Here the Muslim author unapologetically presents Muslims and Christians engaging in the same ritual act together. The description of Muslims making offerings to a Christian monastery provides further confirmation of such behaviour described in other Muslim texts and Christian legal sources.<sup>118</sup> The Sultan’s regular donation adds further approbation and, potentially, encouragement to Muslim readers to join in this practice. Thus, while Muslims and Christians may not have understood the significance of the church or offerings given to it in exactly the same way, following al-Qazwini’s description, this particular celebration seems to be one of egalitarian shared practice. Furthermore, there is no effort to discredit Christian tradition or miracles about the place, rather votive offerings are “tried and proven” (مَجْرَبٌ *mujarrab*). The attention to and praise of the ornamental details of the church follows the pattern of other Muslim authors who express wonder and fascination with the beauty of Christian buildings, although, as we shall see, in contrast to a number of his co-religionists, this author portrays the “fine construction” of the church in an entirely positive light.

Such an explicit, unproblematized description by a Muslim about other Muslims joining in the festivals and expressing their admiration of the holy buildings of Christians or Jews is rather unusual. There were other exceptions to this general tendency. The festival of Nayrūz stands out as one of them. For example, the Mamluk author, al-Qalqashandī (ca. 1355–1418 CE), who collected various discussions of Nayrūz in his administrative guide, includes one which, after describing the Coptic adoption and adaptation of this festival from the Persians, notes that people took more joy in it even than the Persians did, and then comments: “and the excellent swimmers among the

117 وبها بيعة عظيمة عامرة حسنة البناء، مبنية على عمد الرخام منمقة بالفسيفساء، يقال لها النجران، ينذر لها المسلمون والنصارى، ذكروا أن النذر لها مجرب، ولنذره قوم يدورون في البلاد ركاب الخيل، ينادون: من نذر للنجران المبارك؟ وللسلطان عليها عطية يؤدونها كل عام.; al-Qazwīnī, *Āthār al-Bilād*, 185; Campbell, “A Heaven of Wine,” 217–218; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 212.

118 For Christian legal texts addressing what to do with Muslim donations see above in this chapter and the discussion of al-Turkumānī in Chapter 5, as well as Weltecke, “Zum syrisch-orthodoxen Leben.”

Muslims participated in it with them (the Copts).<sup>119</sup> This remark is devoid of censorship. Yet al-Qalqashandī follows this passage with another which, while more detailed in its description of shared practices between Muslims and Copts, also describes the prohibition against them.<sup>120</sup> The Egyptian historian, al-Maqrīzī (1364–1442 CE) likewise describes Muslim participation not only for the Christian festival of Nayrūz, but others as well, such as Christmas and Epiphany (*ʿid al-ghīṭas*), although he also notes when Muslims did not participate or were forbidden to do so by the government. Even in these instances, the ruler, whether caliph or emir, often came out to observe what he had forbidden his co-religionists from joining.<sup>121</sup> Yet, as a number of scholars have noted, such descriptions were far from neutral. Paula Sanders, in her study of Fatimid ritual politics, notes that the Fatimid caliphs sought to create unity between Sunni and Shiʿa factions and between Muslims and non-Muslims by fostering common rituals and ritual behaviors.<sup>122</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, along with al-Qalqashandī and Ibn Taghrībirdī, serves as a major source for Fatimid history, including the establishment of shared or common rituals, since his chronicles preserve older sources from this period, now lost.<sup>123</sup> Yet as Huda Lutfi has amply demonstrated, al-Maqrīzī sought to attribute caliphal and general Muslim participation in and tolerance of festivals such as Nayrūz, or *ʿid al-ghīṭas* as primarily a phenomenon of the Fatimid era, although contemporaneous authors and later chroniclers provide evidence that shared practices and holy sited continued to be the focus of piety by Muslims and non-Muslims alike into the early Ottoman period. Thus, while his descriptions of shared practices and Muslim reception of them may reflect historical reality, their inclusion is part of an effort to cast the Fatimids in a bad light, even when he does not explicitly condemn their patronage of shared festivals. Omissions of such descriptions were part of his project to portray the Mamluks in a relatively more favourable one, as upholders of correct Muslim practice.<sup>124</sup>

The mere presence of non-Muslims at sites which Muslims also revered are relatively rare in comparison to the frequency with which Christians and Jews, especially those from Europe, mention Muslim presence at and interest in their holidays and holy graves. Yet guides to *ziyāra* and travel narratives by Muslim authors reveal that Muslims often sought out churches to visit and that they did indeed travel to many of the same

119 و يشاركهم فيه العوام من المسلمين; al-Qalqashandī, *Kitāb Subḥ al-aʿshā*, 8:419.

120 al-Qalqashandī, *Kitāb Subḥ al-aʿshā*, 8:418–25.

121 al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 2:28–32, 33, 35–37, 442–45, 4:362–63. With Nayrūz he implies that all the people of Egypt/Cairo participate, rather than remarking specifically that Muslims join. Instances of prohibition: 2:27, 37, 441, In 2:444 al-Maqrīzī specifies that celebration of Christmas was not continued by the people of Egypt; the practice belonged to the Fatimid government. He similarly attributes the practices surrounding Easter/Passover to the Fatimids (2:445). These and similar remarks should be understood as part of al-Maqrīzī’s use of the celebration of non-Muslim festivals to discredit the Fatimid regime. Lutfi, “Coptic Festivals of the Nile.”

122 Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City*, 74–76, 81–82.

123 Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City*, 10.

124 Lutfi, “Coptic Festivals of the Nile.”

holy sites even if they did not always choose to remark upon veneration by other religious groups.

As we have seen above, Muslims have a long history of visiting monasteries and churches for a variety of reasons, from seeking shelter, pleasure and curiosity, to piety. Extensive lists and descriptions of not only Christian churches and monasteries, but also synagogues and festivals of non-Muslims by authors from the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods and the inclusion of Christian and Jewish festivals in Muslim calendars all indicate continued Muslim interest in the holy places and festivals of non-Muslims.<sup>125</sup> Indeed, Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī (1300–1349 CE) an administrator in Damascus and Cairo, included a whole section on Christian monasteries and churches in his administrative guide.<sup>126</sup> Many of the descriptions by Muslims who visited churches and monasteries in this later period, suggest that the authors did so primarily out of curiosity rather than religious motivation. Perhaps the most famous and lengthy descriptions of such visits is that by Ibn Baṭūṭa, during his travels in Byzantium during the fourteenth century. There he remarks upon the architectural features of the Aya Sophia and the number and activities of monks and nuns he sees within, and proceeds on what may only be described as a tour of Byzantine monasteries and churches, some of which he is allowed to enter, and some not, although he regularly attempts to do so.<sup>127</sup> Al-Harawī, also describes the beauties of the Aya Sophia and other statues and buildings in Constantinople, finally commenting: “May God make it (an abode) for Islam by his grace and generosity. God be Exalted willing.”<sup>128</sup> Some version of this sentiment is a common refrain in Muslim accounts of their visits to Christian sites which they admire. Nasir i-Khusraw’s description of the Church of Resurrection is also quite detailed. He elaborates about the brocade, images, including of the prophets, the amount of gold used in its decoration. He was also comments with admiration on the monks and priests reading the gospel throughout the day and night.<sup>129</sup> Ibn Jubayr, during nearly all of his descriptions of churches and Christian ceremonies, including during his effusive praise of the Church of the Antiochian in Palermo for its beauties and the loveliness of the women and their adornments that he sees there, evokes God’s protection against any seduction to the soul that these sights might entail.<sup>130</sup> Beautiful churches in Muslim lands, could be safely admired, without comment

**125** Al-Qalqashandī, *Kitāb Subḥ al-a’shā*, 2:417–29; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 2:26–65, 440–47, 4:362–63, 371–72, 373–78, 386–88, 418–61.

**126** al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-ābsār*, 1:254–373; Campbell, “A Heaven of Wine,” 269–70.

**127** Ibn Baṭūṭa, *Voyages*, 2:433–43; Elka Weber notes that Ibn Baṭūṭa’s travel itinerary far exceeded what was necessary for pilgrimage, and emphasizes the role of curiosity and desire for knowledge; Weber, *Traveling through Text*, 42.

**128** *فا الله تع يجعلها دار الاسلام بمنه و كرمه ان شاء الله تع*; al-Harawī, *A Lonely Wayfarer’s Guide*, 144/145–146/147. Quoted passage is on 146/147.

**129** Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *The Book of Travels*, 37–38

**130** Ibn Jubayr, *Riḥlat*, 213, 231; see also 216; Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 320–21, 349–50; see also 324. There Ibn Jubayr is less interested in the beauties of Christian sites in Palestine, than wishing them returned to Muslim control. Indeed, he seems to attempt to systematically counter the impression that he was motivated by curiosity. See Weber, *Traveling through Text*, 42.

about their dangerous allure.<sup>131</sup> Along with entering churches and monasteries, Muslims also observed Christian festivities there. For example, Ibn Jubayr visits the church in Palermo during Christmas.<sup>132</sup> At the end of the fifteenth century, Omar Patun's narrative of his travels between Castile and Mecca, show similar patterns. Although he visits places known to have attracted shared, or parallel veneration, such as the Maṭariyya or the tomb of al-Badawi, he says nothing of Christians, or, when relevant, Jewish presence at such sites.<sup>133</sup> He is curious enough about some of the Christian structures in Jerusalem, however, to accept the guardianship of a friar, who explains the significance of the various Christian sites, which Omar dutifully records.<sup>134</sup> Overall the impression is that Muslim authors were entranced by church decorations. Yet descriptions of Muslims observing, attending or actively participating in festivals and other rituals of Christians and Jews do not always indicate how Muslims understood their own behaviour. As with earlier accounts, such as that of al-Shābushtī (d. ca. 1000 CE), the persistent emphasis on the beauty, strangeness and wonderment of churches, monasteries and the festivals associated with them, as opposed to the religious function of these rituals, suggests that Muslim motivation for attending was often touristic rather than religious. To Jews or Christians who observed Muslims coming to what Jews and Christians considered "their" holy places, it would have *seemed* as if Muslims were coming out of piety, and interpreted their presence accordingly. Nor should genuine veneration by Muslims of holy places revered by Christians and/or Jews be discounted, for as we shall see, a number of Muslim authors engaged in a variety of rhetorical obfuscations that disguised their presence and participation in shared rituals.

Among the most obvious places that garnered shared veneration were the graves of the biblical patriarchs and matriarchs at Hebron. Much like their Western Jewish and Christian counterparts, Muslim travellers regularly describe Hebron and the graves of the patriarchs, yet only occasionally mention members of other religious communities.<sup>135</sup> The Persian Muslim traveller, Nāṣir-i Khusraw, (1004–1088 CE) acknowledges the attraction of Jerusalem and Hebron to Jews and Christians as well as to Muslims more than many of his subsequent co-religionists who chose to describe their experiences travelling in these regions. In his account of Jerusalem, Khusraw clearly indicates that Jerusalem is a pilgrimage destination for Muslims, Jews, and Christians, and yet his description suggests that no shared sites or rituals existed, rather, members of the three groups conducted their pilgrimage parallel to but entirely separate from one another:

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**131** Ibn Jubayr, *Rihlat*, 197–98; Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 295–96.

**132** Ibn Jubayr, *Rihlat*, 231; Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 349.

**133** Patún, *De Ávila a la Meca*, 97, 118. My thanks to Prof. Ana Echevarria of Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid, for alerting me to this source. On al-Maṭariyya see Wolff, *How Many Miles to Babylon?*, 71, 198–202; Milwright, "The Balsam of Maṭariyya." On al-Badawi's tomb as a site for joint Coptic and Muslim celebration, see Mayeur-Jaouen, *Pèlerinages d'Égypte*; Mayeur-Jaouen, *Histoire d'un pèlerinage légendaire en islam*.

**134** Patún, *De Ávila a la Meca*, 90–92.

**135** Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *The Book of Travels*, 35–37; al-Harawī, *A Lonely Wayfarer's Guide*, 76/77–80/81; Ibn Baṭūta, *Voyages*, 4:322; Khalīl al-Zāhirī, *La Zubda*, 35–36.

Jerusalem, which the people of Syria and that region call “Qods” is visited during the season by people of the area who are unable to make the Pilgrimage to Mecca. They perform the requisite rituals and offer a sacrifice on the customary holiday. Some years more than twenty thousand people come during the first days of Dhu l-hejja bringing their children to celebrate their circumcision. From the Byzantine realm and other places too come Christians and Jews to visit the churches and synagogues located there.<sup>136</sup>

Included in his discussion of Hebron, is what appears to be a kind of shared practice in the form of food distributed in honour of Abraham’s hospitality:

Visitors, guests and travelers are given bread and olives. There are also many gristmills where oxen and mules grind flour all day long. There are also young girls who bake bread every day, each loaf weighing one maund. Everyone who goes there is given a daily ration of one loaf of bread, a bowl of lentils cooked with olive oil and raisins, a custom that has been maintained from the time of Abraham himself down to the present day. One some days there are 500 people present all of whom receive this hospitality.<sup>137</sup>

Only knowing that Jews and Christians did go to Hebron and partake of meals there, plus Khusraw’s subsequent mention of Christians travelling to Bethlehem, allows one to infer that non-Muslims probably joined this ritual. References in other Muslim narratives to additional sites run by Muslims or Christians, many of which were known to be revered by multiple religious groups, in which food or alms were distributed to or by “strangers,” suggests that cross-confessional charity was an integral element of certain holy sites. These in turn would have cultivated a kind of shared veneration by all comers, since they would have fulfilled the dual function of both holy place and ways station and source of refreshment for the poor and weary travellers.<sup>138</sup> The distribution of food and other gifts was a key element in Fatimid participation in or patronage of festivals, as part of their policy to create a “ritual community,” according to Sanders.<sup>139</sup> This type of piety, complete with its community-creating element seems to have continued in later Muslim dynasties at festivals and certain centres of shared veneration. Food touched by pilgrims

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**136** Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *The Book of Travels*, 21.

**137** Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *The Book of Travels*, 36–37.

**138** Ibn Jubayr, *Rihlat*, 178, 200; Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 261, 299–300; Ibn Baṭūṭa, *Voyages*, 1: 115–20, 133, 415, 2:19, 349–50; Khalīl al-Zāhirī, *La Zubda*, 36; Leo Africanus, *Cosmographia de l’Africa*, 536–37, 569; Leo Africanus, *Description de l’Afrique*, 2:497–98, 534. Also compare with Ibn Baṭūṭa, *Voyages*, 2:82, where in Sri Lanka (in contrast to India), according to Ibn Baṭūṭa, the non-Muslim inhabitants provide hospitality and food to Muslim *fakirs*. A few of these examples are primarily Muslim sites and so charity would have been internal, however, the impulse and description of the activity is similar in all. For a discussion of the legality of cross-religious charity, see discussion earlier in this chapter.

**139** Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City*, 29–30, 47, 75–76, 78–82; Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ* 2:439, 442, 444.

seems to have been considered holy by some, to the point that locals were eager to bite from the same piece of bread given to pious travellers.<sup>140</sup>

Other types of holy substances were also distributed at certain sites, known to have attracted individuals from multiple religious confessions, yet Muslims accounts do not always acknowledge the presence of others or, if they do, imply that any sort of shared veneration took place. For example, Muslim descriptions of shared pilgrimage and veneration of the icon of the Virgin at Saydnaya likewise often imply that this place was of interest to Christians only. Al-'Umarī, for example, describes Christian practices at this site in some detail, including the process by which the mixture of oil and water was collected from the statue, and al-'Umarī's own observations about the nature of the substance. His own presence at the shrine and curiosity about the substance coming from the icon indicates the draw which the place had for Muslims, yet this author downplays the popularity of the site for other Muslims, in contrast to the testimony in Christian narratives of Muslim veneration of the place.<sup>141</sup>

Hebron and the church of the Virgin at Saydnaya were far from the only sites that attracted both Muslim and non-Muslim pilgrims according to Muslim sources. Various Muslim authors note shrines to St. Sergius, St. George, and/or al-Khidr and the biblical prophet, Elijah, while at the same time describing Christian and/or Jewish monuments or pilgrimage to these sites. Very often these have both a mosque and a church or synagogue located on or near the site, thus clearly indicating that this was a destination for more than one group.<sup>142</sup> Jewish and Christian sources likewise testify to shared veneration of figures such as Elijah, St. George. and/or al-Khidr in some form, and to sites which hosted adjacent places belonging to different religious communities yet both linked with Elijah. For example, Benjamin of Tudela notes: "Two sons of Edom (Christians) constructed a shrine which they called Saint Ilyās. At the summit of the mountain, the place of the destroyed altar which Elijah, of blessed memory, repaired during the time of Ahab is recognized. It is the place of the round altar which is four cubits in size."<sup>143</sup> The presentation of these sites, and some of those described above, such as Hebron or the tomb of Ezechiel, by many Muslim, Christian, or Jewish authors portray these places

**140** Ibn Jubayr, *Rihlat*, 200; Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 300.

**141** al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-ābṣār*, 1:356–57; Yāqūt *Mu'jam al-buldān*, 3:441; Campbell "A Heaven of Wine," 218–20; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 210. More generally, see Kedar, "Convergences...Saydnaya and the Knights Templar"; Kedar, "Convergences...Saydnaya"; Baraz, "The Incarnated Icon of Saidnaya Goes West."

**142** Ibn Jubayr, *Rihlat*, 168, 193; Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 244–45, 287; Ibn Baṭūṭa, *Voyages*, 2:19, 136, 232–33, 349–50, 369ff. On the pairing of Khidr, St. George and/or Elijah and the function of such sanctuaries to draw mixed religious pilgrimage and veneration see Wolper, "Khidr and the Politics of Translation in Mosul"; Wolper, "Khidr and the Politics of Place"; Wolper, "Khidr and the Changing Frontiers"; Wolper, *Cities and Saints*; Pancaroglu, "The Itinerant Dragon-Slayer"; Meri, "Re-Appropriating Sacred Space"; Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam*, 1:319–36; Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain*.

**143** ועשו שם שני בני אדם במה וקראוה שנט אליש ובראש ההר ניכר מקום המזבח ההרוס שריפא אליהו ז"ל בימי אחאב. והוא מקום המזבח העלול כמו ארבע אמות  
Benjamin of Tudela, *Masa'ot*, ed. Asher 1:31. Meri, "Re-Appropriating Sacred Space"; On Jewish views of Elijah also see Narkiss, "Living the Dead Became".

as attracting the first type of “convergent” veneration identified by Kedar, namely parallel visitation and rituals without any actual sharing by the various groups involved.<sup>144</sup> However, as Dorothea Weltecke has argued, such “räumliche Konvergenz”, i.e. sharing of a holy place without shared rituals, could often intersect with Kedar’s second category, namely unequal or hierarchical convergence.<sup>145</sup> Indeed, as Meri points out in his analysis of the passage by Benjamin of Tudela, the Jewish author’s vocabulary for the Christian shrine is polemical; Benjamin uses the term “*bamah*,” (במה) which is normally used to indicate an idolatrous shrine, in contrast to the Jewish “*mizbeah*” (מזבח) an altar which Elijah consecrates to God.<sup>146</sup> Furthermore, the reference to the altar which Elijah repaired during Ahab’s time, refers to 1 Kings 18:30, the context of which is that Elijah gets into a miracle contest with the priests of Ba’al, ultimately proving that Elijah’s God, and the altar of the Israelites is the true one. The choice of reference is that God/Elijah himself will demonstrate whose altar/shrine is false and which is true. Thus, while both Jews and Christians clearly came to a common or adjacent location, revered because of its believed connection to the Prophet Elijah, Benjamin voices his contempt for the Christian form of worship and invalidates it, or at least marks it as inferior to the Jewish one, by nuancing his choice of the word for altar.

This kind of adjacent spaces of veneration, which often became sites of competition, and efforts to disguise or disparage the presence of the religious other, also appear in Muslim narratives. As evidenced by the example of Saydnaya, discussed briefly above, and the descriptions by Western European Christian travellers analyzed earlier, places associated with Mary, mother of Jesus attracted both Christian and Muslim pilgrims. Muslim chroniclers and travel writers list these places but do not detail rituals shared by Muslims and Christians. Information is provided about the site and the activities of Jesus or Mary at a given site, however, if Muslim authors discuss Christians at all, they usually describe their customs and beliefs without making any parallels with those of Muslims.<sup>147</sup> Yet the presence of these Muslim writers, and their inclusion of places revered by members of other religions is in itself an indication of the shared nature of these sites. For example, al-Harawī (d. 1215 CE), notes the Church of the Tree in Tiberias, and comments that “A wondrous event, which is mentioned in the Gospel, took place on this spot involving Jesus son of Mary and the tanner.”<sup>148</sup> Here, while the Muslim author does not depict Christians at the shrine, he is willing to present Christian scripture as validation of the place’s miraculous history, thus suggesting that al-Harawī is untroubled by

**144** See discussion above and Kedar, “Convergences...Saydnaya and the Knights Templar”; Kedar, “Convergences...Saydnaya.”

**145** Weltecke, “Multireligiöse Loca Sancta,” esp. 78.

**146** Meri, “Re-Appropriating Sacred Space,” esp. n20 and 1 Kings 18:30.

**147** Nasir-i Khorsraw, *The Book of Travels*, 35; Ibn al-Ḥawrānī, *Kitāb al-Ishārāt*, 123; Ibn al-Ḥawrānī, “Guide to the Pilgrimage Places,” 64; al-Harawī, *A Lonely Wayfarer’s Guide*, 38/39; Ibn Baṭūṭa, *Voyages*, 1:115–20, 124, 188–89, 233; Khalīl al-Zāhirī, *La Zubda*, 35, 42.

**148** و لهذا الموضوع حكاية عجيبة جرت لعيسى بن مريم عم مع الصباغ ذكرت في الانجيل al-Harawī, *A Lonely Wayfarer’s Guide*, 38/39.

Christian associations with a Muslim destination for *ziyāra*. The same author, describing holy sites near Baghdad notes:

Below al Hilla is a village called Shūsha. It contains the tomb of Abū l-Qāsim ibn Mūsā ibn Ja'far, may God be pleased with him. Among the Jewish pilgrimage places there is the tomb of Duh l-Kifl, who is the Prophet Ezechiel in a location called Bar Malaha to the east of a village called Qusūnāt. Also in this village is the tomb of Barukh [Barukh b. Nariah] the Prophet Ezechiel's master and teacher, the tomb of Yusuf al-Rabban which [Jews] visit, the tomb of Joshua—not Joshua son of Nun, the tomb of Ezra [Azra]—not the Ezra who is the transmitter and copyist of the Torah. God knows best.<sup>149</sup>

Perhaps he lists these sites merely as a point of curiosity for his readers, much like the elaborate descriptions of churches in many Muslim narratives discussed earlier. Yet these holy graves also appear to have been part of al-Harawī's own itinerary for *ziyāra*. Near the end of the passage, his comment that the tombs of Joshua and Ezra are not those of the biblical figures and that God knows best, implies that some individuals mistook these figures for their more illustrious namesakes. Nevertheless, al-Harawī judges it prudent to leave the ultimate identification of these tombs to divine rather than human judgement.<sup>150</sup> Since Jews are among those travelling to these sites, and thus, presumably, the source of some of the confusion about the identity of the gravesites, al-Harawī's remark serves to call into question the validity of the Jewish tradition, yet all the while suggesting that these places were also attractive to him and to other Muslims. By so doing, he allows for the possibility that Jewish traditions could serve as authentication for the sites, without seeming to wholeheartedly endorse them. We know from accounts by European Jewish travellers discussed earlier in this chapter, that Jews and Muslims visited the graves of these figures, so al-Harawī's ambiguity should be understood as a narrative strategy, much as Jewish authors crafted their accounts of shared veneration, when they chose to depict Muslims alongside Jews asking Ezechiel to defend their goods.<sup>151</sup>

In another instance, al-Harawī describes at length a joined church/mosque which housed the miraculously un-decomposed bodies of martyrs. According to al-Harawī, both Muslims and Byzantine Christians argued over the martyrs' religious affiliation, each claiming these anonymous holy dead men for their own community.<sup>152</sup> At first

**149** و تحت الحلة قرية يقال لها شوشة بها قبر ابي القاسم بن موسى بن جعفر رضه. و بها لليهود من الزيارات هناك قبر ذي الكفل و هو حزقيال النبي عم في موضع يقال له برملاحة شرقي قرية يقال لها قسونات. و بهذه القرية قبر باروخ أستاذ حزقيال و معلمه، و بها قبر يوسف al-Harawī; الربان يزورونه، و بها قبر يوشع و ليس هذا يوشع بن نون، و بها قبر عزرا و ليس هذا عزرا ناقل التوراة الكاتب و الله أعلم A Lonely Wayfarer's Guide, 198/199.

**150** Later in his narrative he lists Nahr Samura as the burial site of the Ezra who is the transmitter of the Torah; al-Harawī, *Kitāb al-Ishārāt*, 204/205. Other Muslim writers also used this phrase in response to conflicting information about a site. See for example: Ibn Jubayr; *Rihlat*, 178; Ibn Jubayr; *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 261.

**151** Petahia of Regensburg, *Sivuv*, 10–19; Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 71–78; Jacobs, *Reorienting the East*, 119–20; Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, 26, 212, 229–38. Also see Chapter 2 of this book.

**152** al-Harawī, A Lonely Wayfarer's Guide, 154/155–156/157. Compare with Meshullam ben

glance, this competition between communities over the affiliation of the holy dead and therefore, over who could lay claim to their miracles and control over the shrine, seems to parallel the configurations of hierarchy and competition extant in western pilgrimage narratives, regardless of the affiliation of the author. Yet, in the midst of this debate, al-Harawī also notes that the local population directs pilgrims either to the mosque or the church, depending on the religion of the newcomer, indicating local acceptance of Muslim and Christian attendance of the shrine. Furthermore, al-Harawī displays his typical ambivalence in this passage, for he refuses to choose sides, much as he left God to decide between truth and local lore regarding the placement Ezra and Joshua's tombs. He is complicit therefore, in tolerating non-Muslims at a holy site, which some Muslims at least, claimed as their own. In this instance the "sharing" appears to have been ultimately "egalitarian," namely no one party successfully claimed domination, yet, in his narrative, participants from differing communities shared place but not ritual. Such acceptance, even encouragement of both Christian and Muslim veneration of the site may have been economic in nature—pilgrims of any kind brought revenue to the communities through which they travelled—although, if so, this aspect is not made explicit.<sup>153</sup> Regardless of the motivation, according to al-Harawī, the local population accepted and facilitated pilgrims from multiple confessional backgrounds, and al-Harawī himself accepted this state of affairs.<sup>154</sup>

Yet the hierarchical impulse is not completely absent. Here and elsewhere in his narrative, al-Harawī manages to imply Jewish and Christian knowledge should automatically be called into question, often in contrast to Muslim traditions, thus creating a hierarchy of reliability, in which Jewish and Christian traditions are presented with interest, but uncertain relative to Muslim tradition.<sup>155</sup> Al-Harawī's questioning of Jewish and Christian traditions about holy places very much fits the tendencies among Muslim authors to challenge or exclude Christian lore about holy sites outlined by Elizabeth Campbell.<sup>156</sup> That Jewish tales were treated in the same way suggests that Muslims did not see Christians as the only "competition" for holy sites. Many Muslim authors were anxious to assert Muslim pre-eminence over *any* shared space, and they did so by eliding Jewish as well as Christian presence, or by problematizing knowledge received from either of them. This approach is quite different than that of Jewish and Christian authors. The latter, as we have seen, sought to establish religious priority by regaling readers with tales of a given prophet or saint punishing irreverent members of the reli-

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Menachem da Volterra's description of Muslims urging Jews to visit the graves of holy people whose identity was unknown and competing claims between Muslims and Jews over their affiliation. Meshullam da Voltera, *Mas'a*, 75.

**153** Bell and Dale, "Medieval Pilgrimage Business"; Weber, *Traveling through Text*, 28–29, 120–22.

**154** It is not clear whether the local population was Muslim or Christian or a mixture thereof. Either scenario would involve some cross-religious cooperation.

**155** Compare with other instances in which al-Harawī conveys information about holy individuals and sites he received from Christians or Jews. A Lonely Wayfarer's Guide, 12/13, 66/67, 74/75, 78/79.

**156** Campbell, "A Heaven of Wine," 48, 200–202, 220–23.

gious other, or by presenting various categories of the religious other on a sliding scale of acceptability before God or a given saint. Such antics also appear in Muslim sources, but exist alongside efforts to discredit non-Muslim traditions entirely or to emphasize political power alongside saintly puissance as an agent for establishing the “correct” dominance of Muslim over non-Muslim at shared and/or repossessed sites.

Some Muslim authors simply accused Christians or Jews of lying, as in the case of Ibn Baṭūṭa. When discussing the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Ibn Baṭūṭa presents Christians as purveyors of false knowledge. He accuses them of lying by stating that Jesus was buried there, and then gloats: “On everyone who makes pilgrimage to it (the church marking the tomb of Jesus) is a known tax to the Muslims and various insult(s) which they bear unwillingly.”<sup>157</sup> This passage recalls the narratives the Christian friars, Suriano and Felix Fabri discussed earlier in this chapter, who included elaborate accounts of how Mary subdued the Muslim custodians of Mary’s tomb, and forced them to allow Christians access to the shrine without cost, or even to pay tribute to the Christians. Both of these echo Christian demands that Muslim or Jewish subjects “donate” to Christian religious institutions in Iberia, for payment to the religious other is a mark of subjugation.<sup>158</sup> Having to pay Muslims taxes in order to enter a Christian site was intended as a humiliation and to mark Christians’ inferior status to the Muslims. For Ibn Baṭūṭa it was polemic enough to emphasize what he considered to be falsely accorded sanctity of the church and note that *dhimmi*s must pay to visit a holy place. Christians (and Jews) countered these tactics by accounts of attacks by the holy dead, which forced Muslims to endure the same kind of degradation in face of the saint’s power.

Reminiscent of Jewish and Christian tales of the vengeful holy dead, al-Harawī includes a tale in which ‘Alī ibn Abī Talib, the Prophet’s uncle, defends a shrine dedicated to him. The Franks had transformed it into a church, and had appointed a custodian over it, much like the Muslims appointed custodians of Christian and Jewish sites. According to al-Harawī, ‘Alī appears to the custodian and demands that it be reverted to a mosque. When the custodian does not comply, he dies. The same fate awaits the next custodian, until the Franks finally agree to allow the shrine to revert to a mosque.<sup>159</sup> In contrast to Suriano, Fabri, or even Ibn Baṭūṭa, it is not a question of merely establishing hierarchical dominance over a potentially shared site, but rather about reclaiming Muslim sacred space entirely from the religious other. This element distinguishes al-Harawī’s account from similar tales told by Jews and Christians. While both local and Western European Jews and Christians might imagine saintly vengeance on disrespectful non-believers, the possibility of regaining complete control over a site that had captured Muslim interest was understood to be small. By contrast, al-Harawī and other Muslim writers saw or hoped that Christian domination would be a temporary situation, which God would soon remedy. Localized vengeance against Christians who, from a Muslim perspective,

**157** وعلى كل من حجها ضريبة معلومة للمسلمين وضروب من الإهانة يتحملها على رغم انفه; Ibn Baṭūṭa, *Voyages*, 1:124.

**158** Of course, in the arrangement described by Ibn Baṭūṭa and the required donations by Jews and Muslims in Western, Christian Europe are actual acts, whereas the one described by Felix Fabri and Suriano is an imaginary one. The symbolic import is similar however.

**159** al-Harawī *A Lonely Wayfarer’s Guide*, 44/45.

attempted to illegitimately coopt a Muslim holy site, served to reassure readers of this eventuality. In such cases, Christians (or, more rarely, Jews) did not become members of the saint's hierarchical community of followers, rather they were symbolically relegated to their "correct" political and religious place, by being made entirely subject to Muslim (both living and dead) regulation.

The interplay between tales of saintly vengeance and Muslim expectations of actual subjugation of non-Muslims who laid claim to a holy site (even a predominantly non-Muslim one) is particularly clear in a story about the monastery of Mimas on the Orontes river between Damascus and Hims in Yāqūt's *Mu'jam al-buldān*:

In this monastery is a martyr who, it is said, was an apostle of Jesus. Its monks claim that he cures maladies. The poet Butayn fell sick and was taken to the monastery to beg for his cure. It is said the people of the monastery did not pay attention to him and that he urinated in front of the tomb of the martyr. Then as it happened he died after that. The news spread among the inhabitants of Hims that the martyr had killed him. They set out for the monastery in order to destroy it saying, "A Christian who killed a Muslim, we will not accept this! Hand over the bones of the martyr, or we will burn them!" The Christians gave a gift to the governor of Hims to deliver them from the populace.<sup>160</sup>

In this narrative both the Muslim poet, Butayn, and the Muslim populace take the Christian saint and Christian claims seriously. Butayn and the companions who brought him to the monastery are portrayed as believing that the Christian martyr would be both willing and able to cure the ailing Muslim poet. The populace also believes in the power of the Christian holy person, although in this case they are furious with him, believing that he killed the Muslim who sought his help. While Yāqūt hints that the monks were at fault, since he notes that they ignored the Muslim supplicant, the populace seems to blame the saint directly; they want the bones of the martyr, presumably to exact vengeance on them. They threaten the monks only in so far as they are reluctant to relinquish the martyr's remains. It is not clear in the passage how the Muslim populace comes to the conclusion that the Christian saint actively killed Butayn, but his death immediately follows an act of scorn against the martyr and his monastery full of inattentive monks. The implication seems to be that the saint killed him in retribution, much like the unfortunate Muslim who urinated on the Church of Saint James in François Savary de Breves's account, although in that instance, the Muslim survived the Christian saint's painful ministrations, and repented. If the Christian monks, or other members of the Christian population perpetrated a story of saintly vengeance against the disrespectful Muslim, similar to so many anecdotes in Christian and Jewish travel narratives and chronicles, this account reveals both how seriously Muslims themselves might take such rumours and how this strategy by religious minorities under Islam could backfire. Members

160 وبه شاهد على زعمهم من حواربي عيسى، عليه السلام، زعم رهبانه انه يشفي المرضى، وكان البطين الشاعر قد مرض فجاؤوا به اليه يستشفي فيه فقيل ان أهله غفلوا عنه فبال قدام قبر الشاهد، واتفق أن مات عقيب ذلك، فشاع بين أهل حمص أن الشاهد قتله وقصدوا الدير ليهدموه و قالوا: نصراني يقبل مسلماً لا نرضى! أو تسلموا اليها عظام الشاهد حتى نحرقها، فرشا النصرارى أمير حمص حتى رفع عنهم العامة: Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, 2:702; Campbell, "A Heaven of Wine," 227–28.

of multiple religious communities could and seemingly did accept such assertions of saintly power and dominance, but were not automatically willing to acquiesce to the implications of spiritual hierarchy that their perpetrators hoped to assert. More generally, this passage upholds the impression that more earnest veneration of Christian and Jewish sites by Muslims took place than Muslim authors were always willing to disclose.

Such dynamics of dominance and resistance are well illustrated by several accounts of discontented acceptance of shared holy space in Ibn Jubayr's *Risala* (1145–1217 CE). When describing a site in Acre called 'ayn al-baqar, the spring of the cattle from which God brought forth cattle for Adam, Ibn Jubayr comments:

Over it is a mosque of which there remains in its former state only the mihrab, to the east of which the Franks have built their own mihrab and Muslim and infidel both assemble there: the one turning to his place of worship the other to his. In the hands of the Christians it is mostly maintained, and God has preserved in it a place of prayer for the Muslims.<sup>161</sup>

Ibn Jubayr's disapproval of the non-Muslims is reflected in the term "infidel" (*al-kāfir* الكافر), however, he also accords the Christians credit for preserving the place, although God, not the Christians, is said to have ensured that Muslims still have access to the holy site. This last comment expresses resistance to the situation as Ibn Jubayr found it, by removing ultimate control over the site from the current holders of power, the Christians, and assigning it to God. The unspoken assertion is that even as God now chose to protect the place for Muslims, he could remove the place from Christian hands at will. God's intervention is even clearer in Ibn Jubayr's discussion of Acre just prior to his description of 'ayn al-baqar. He notes that many Christians (whom he calls pigs) and crosses are in Acre and that mosques have become churches and minarets bell towers. Nevertheless, according to Ibn Jubayr, God preserved the principal mosque and kept it in the hands of the Muslims. Referring to the tomb of prophet Salih, Ibn Jubayr asserts: "God protected this spot from the filth of the unbelievers by the blessing of this holy tomb."<sup>162</sup> For both the main mosque of Acre and the spring from which God drew cattle for Adam, Ibn Jubayr is eager to affirm some measure of divine control and Muslim access in the face of defeat and appropriation by Christians. The sharing of the holy

<sup>161</sup> و عليها مسجد بقى محرابه على حاله، و وضع الافرنج في شرفيه محرابا لهم، فالمسلم و الكافر يجتمعان فيه: يستقبل هذا مصلا، 161 و هذا مصلا، و هو بأيدى النصارى معظم محفوظ و أبقى الله فيه موضع الصلاة للمسلمين Ibn Jubayr, *Rihlat*, 212; Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 318–19. My translation differs somewhat from that of Broadhurst. Among other small differences, he reads the word معظم as *mu'azzam*, meaning venerated, glorified, splendid. I read the word as *mu'zam*, meaning mostly. As tempting as Broadhurst's translation is, this fits slightly better with the sentence structure, and the partially ruined state of the building which Ibn Jubayr describes. For another example of an appropriated holy place shared by Muslims and Christians, in this case a church that had been turned to a mosque see Ibn Baṭūṭa, *Voyages*, 1:203

<sup>162</sup> فحرس الله هذه البقعة من رجس الكفرة ببركة هذا القبر المقدس Ibn Jubayr, *Rihlat*, 212; Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 318. Again my translation differs slightly from Broadhurst. رجس, which is translated by Broadhurst as desecration, can mean "shameful act," "atrocious" or "filth." The last meaning fits in with some of the uncomplimentary terms, such as "pig," which Ibn Jubayr uses for the Franks and some of their holy places in this section of his account.



gain by selling their holy space to the Muslims, and thus, theoretically, ending any shared veneration or Christian claim to the place.<sup>165</sup>

This last example portrays a shared holy space, but for the Muslim author it was important to present the history of this once shared site in such a way as to erase any suggestion of commonality or harmony between the two communities, as a form of resistance to the presence of the crusaders occupying lands and holy places Ibn Jubayr considered to be solely the purview of Muslims. The sharing of holy space itself is not criticized, rather the violation of correct spiritual hierarchy of Muslim over *dhimmi*, in this case, Christian.

## Conclusions

In the aftermath of the crusades, Muslims were increasingly inclined to transform desirable holy sites that had once been shared to some degree between Muslims, Christians, and/or Jews. Dual sites of parallel veneration were no longer always acceptable, and Muslims began to appropriate them entirely for themselves and to reformulate older legends of reassigned holy sites, like the one about the cathedral mosque in Damascus, to emphasize Muslim power. A number of scholars have noted that the Mamluk Sultan, Baybars (r. 1260–1277), went on a campaign to increase the number of holy sites for Muslims, often “discovering” a saint. In the process, the holy sites of non-Muslims were threatened or actually transformed into mosques.<sup>166</sup> Such policies of confiscating and destroying or transforming non-Muslim holy sites continued well after Baybars, although Muslim authorities could, occasionally, be appeased by overtures extended by religious minority communities.<sup>167</sup>

Accounts of Muslim participation in Christian or Jewish festivals, processions for a religious leader, or visiting holy sites in Eastern Christian and Jewish narratives, by contrast, expressed approbation of Muslim presence both because, as politically powerful overlords, Muslims added prestige. However, the assertion that Muslims, especially a Muslim leader, respected a Christian or Jewish site or figure may also be understood as a counter-rhetoric to Muslim pressure or increased inclination to turn churches and synagogues into mosques. When living Christians could do nothing against their Muslim overlords, much like narratives by western authors, tales of saintly vengeance allowed the holy dead to do what the living could not; inflict divine justice and provide vicarious, literary “revenge”.

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**165** Of course readers would also have understood that the Christians would have had little choice under such circumstances, yet the capitulation of the Christians still stands in stark contrast to the behaviour of the caliph. Compare with Ibn al-Ḥawrānī, *al-Ishārāt*, 75–76, translated in Meri, “Guide to the Pilgrimage places also known as Syrian Pilgrimage Places,” 45–46, which notes al-Walīd’s conversion of the church to a mosque, but without the dramatic details. Dols, *Majnūn*, 374–422.

**166** Campbell, “A Heaven of Wine,” 233–36; Frenkel, “Baybars and the Sacred Geography of Bilad al-Sham”; Holt, “The Virtuous Ruler.”

**167** Khalīl al-Zāhirī, *La Zubda*, 240; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 4:440–42.

Christian and Jewish authors from Egypt and the Levant also seem more inclined to recognize and utilize the presence of the other as further validation of a site or person's holy status than their European counterparts were. It is tempting to conclude that this tendency points to better relations between Jews and Christians living under Islamic rule than in Western Europe. Yet the negative tone toward Christians in a number of Jewish pilgrimage guides, hagiographies and chronicles and the existence of a substantial body of Eastern Christian anti-Jewish polemic in both Arabic and Syriac, speak against facile assumptions of easy conviviality between Jewish and Christian communities.<sup>168</sup> Jews from the Middle East focused on Muslim reverence for Jewish sites, to the point of ignoring ambivalent or dual associations with Muslim holy figures as well as Jewish ones. Muslims brought status to Jewish sites. On the other hand, Jewish authors, when they mentioned Christians at all, like their Western co-religionists were negative in the language they used.

For Christian authors from the Middle East, treatment of Jews was more mixed. While negative stories about Jewish treatment of Christian relics, icons, or members of the holy family certainly circulated, for the most part Christian writers recognized that Jews struggled under the same restrictions as the Christian communities, and they discussed these vicissitudes and Jews' reactions with sympathy or even admiration.<sup>169</sup> Despite the fact that Jews and Christians under Muslim rule could find themselves in real competition with one another, the shared experience of minority status seems to have created a sense of commonality rather than threat.<sup>170</sup> Nevertheless, because of their dominant status, Muslims lent greater significance to a holy person or place than could any subjugated population, thus Jews and Christians remarked upon Muslim attendance more eagerly than they did the participation of one another. While both Jewish and Christian writers in under Islamic rule in the Eastern Mediterranean shared this characteristic with their western counterparts, Christians under Islamic rule, in con-

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**168** Roggema, "Polemics between Religious Minorities"; Becker, "L'antijudaïsme syriaque"; Rosenkranz, *Die jüdisch-christliche Auseinandersetzung*; Hayaman, "Image of the Jew."

**169** Anti-Jewish stories Agapius, *Kitāb al-'Unwān*, pt. 2, pp. 439–40; Pseudo-Athanasius of Alexandria, *Sermon of the Miracle of Beirut*, cols. 797/798–805/806; Pseudo-Cyril of Alexandria, *Sermon sur la penitence*, 6:493–528; Nau and Nemoj, eds. and transl., *Les légendes syriaques*, 709–10; Bayan, ed. and transl., *Le Synaxaire arméniens*, 104–6. Even in these stories, Jews usually come across more positively than later western renditions of the same tales. Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 151, 161; Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 1–10; Shoemaker, "Let Us Go and Burn Her Body." For examples of Eastern Christian accounts of Jewish experiences under Muslim rule see Yahyā ibn Sa'īd, *Histoire*, 416/417; 446/447–448/449; Yahyā ibn Sa'īd, *Histoire de Yahyā ibn Sa'īd d'Antioche, continuateur de Sa'īd ibn Bitriq*, 511–12; HOCP vol. 3, pt. 1 *Macarius II–John V 1102–1167*, English, 90, Arabic, 53–54; HOCP vol. 4, pt. 1 *Cyril III, Ibn Lakak 1216–1243*, English, 125–26, Arabic, 60.

**170** While Jews in the Middle East continued to polemicize against Christianity, they were also curious about and sometimes drawn to Christianity. For example, MS Par. AR. 172 contains polemical "exchange" between a Jewish convert to Christianity, named Abū l-Fakhr and a Jew, one Abū al-'Alā (Ma'alā) al-Ṣāyigh. For further indications of Jewish-Christian exchange and Jewish interest in Christianity see Roggema, "Polemics between Religious Minorities"; Cuffel, "Conversion and Religious Polemic"; *Polemic of Nestor*; HOCP vol. 3, pt. 1 *Macarius II–John V 1102–1167*, English, 90, Arabic, 53–54; Szilágyi, "Christian Books in Jewish Libraries"; Goldstein, "Judeo-Arabic Versions."

trast to those from Western Europe, did not seek to place Jews in a hierarchical position below Muslims. Rather, for Christian authors from Egypt and West Asia, Jewish interest in Christian figures or spaces were treated much like that of Muslim interest, namely as proof of the sanctity and honour of the person or place that had attracted such extra-Christian attention.

The question remains why Muslims so often ignore or downplay the presence of Christians or Jews at locales known to have been pilgrimage destinations for multiple groups? In her examination of later Muslim authors, like Yāqūt (1179–1229 CE) and al-‘Umarī, who used al-Shābushtī’s accounts of Muslim attendance of Christian monasteries and festivals, Elizabeth Campbell notes that these later authors often elided over Muslim presence at these sites and participation in the festivals there, and either left out Christian versions of the meanings of sites or cast doubt on their veracity. For example, in comparing Muslim descriptions of the procession of the body of a martyr connected to the monastery of Yuḥannis in Egypt, and its submersion in the Nile to ensure the river’s rise, Campbell points out that in contrast to al-Shābushtī, who takes this practice as a wonder, both al-‘Umarī and Yāqūt end by denying or denouncing this Christian practice and the beliefs behind it, despite having replicated much of al-Shābushtī’s account.<sup>171</sup> The same tactic may be identified in a number of al-Maqrīzī’s depictions of monasteries, churches, and synagogues. When describing the history of a place he sometimes begins by stating “the Jews/Christians claim,” using the verb *za‘ama* (زعم) which suggests or, at least leaves open the possibility that what they say is not true.<sup>172</sup> Occasionally he is more explicit in his disapproval, for example, when describing the monastery of Magḥṭis he proclaims: “all of their claims about it are their lies and fantasies!”<sup>173</sup> Campbell attributes such narrative strategies among Muslim authors to greater competition between Muslim and Christian claims regarding holy sites from the crusading period onwards.<sup>174</sup> I would further suggest that Christians and Jews appear only sporadically in Muslim travel accounts and pilgrimage guides because neither Christians nor Jews could add greatly to the prestige of the place or the prophets associated with it. Rather, mentioning them in conjunction with a saint or Muslims joining them in their celebrations and holy places, would have granted them a level of distinction and admitted their equality and commonality with Muslims and Muslims’ status as the chosen of God and the recipient of saintly blessing. Some of the participants may have been inclined to do precisely that, but Muslim geographers, travellers, and chroniclers often were not.

The contrast between travel narratives and Sufi hagiographical works is quite sharp. I would suggest that texts by and about Sufis are engaged with *dhimmī*, because during the Ayyubid and Mamluk period especially, Sufis were heavily involved in policing

**171** Campbell, “A Heaven of Wine,” 221–23, 300; al-Shābushtī, *Kitāb al-Diyārāt*, 312; al-‘Umarī, *Masālik al-ābṣār* 1:360–61; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-buldān*, 2:710. Campbell’s references to this monastery on 221–23, are incorrect. The name is “Yuḥannis” not “Bu Hannis” and the references to the page numbers in al-‘Umarī and Yāqūt are incorrect. The correct references and name are on p. 300.

**172** al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 4: 362, 371, 422, 430.

**173** لهم فيه مزاعم كلها من أكاذيبهم المختلفة; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khiṭaṭ*, 4:433.

**174** Campbell, “A Heaven of Wine,” 220–23, 226–36.

and shaping what they considered to be the proper place of dhimmis in Muslim society. Therefore, the hagiographies are about creating an ideal narrative where Sufis are in control and non-Muslims are moving toward incorporation into the Muslim faith. Muslim travel narratives, on the other hand, for the most part, were not written by those with such an agenda. As a result, because Christians and Jews were not important, they could be readily ignored. An exception was the crusades where, from the Muslim perspective, non-Muslims, specifically Christians, were everybody's problem.

For Muslims confronted with crusader occupation, Christian control over a site holy to Muslims could only be rectified by its reversal. The frequency with which the religious other appears in Jewish and Christian accounts of holy tombs, shrines, or festivals, in contrast to Muslim texts, reflect the importance and level of anxiety regarding their status relative to Muslims or one another. Muslims, writing from a place of power, could discuss or disregard Jewish or Christian presence at holy sites and festivals at will, with little at stake. Evidence of shared practice and polemical remarks about it appear as commentaries to assert the "proper" hierarchy between Muslim and *dhimmi*. For Muslim authors, such as Al-Harawī or Ibn Jubayr, writing during the period of the crusades, or coming from Europe where Christian rule over Muslims was more common, reestablishing "correct" hierarchy was all the more vital, and indeed, these authors refer to Christians in particular in greater detail and animus when describing shared or contested holy sites.



## 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, Mizrahi, 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 Andalusī authors such as Ibn Ḥabīb, changes.<sup>1</sup> Maghribī authors likewise express anxiety about Muslims adopting the festivals of other religious communities. Ibn ‘Abdūn

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<sup>1</sup> 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-munazzam fī mawlid al-nabī al-mu’azzam* 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup> 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).<sup>5</sup> Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 1336) likewise came from North Africa, although he concentrated his energies on refuting innovative practices in Egypt.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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-munazzam fī mawlid al-nabī al-mu’azzam* 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 *El, “Bid’a”*; Maribel Fierro’s introduction to al-Ṭurṭūshī’s *Kitāb al-ḥawādith 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.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup>

### 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.<sup>10</sup> 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 *dhimmi*s,

<sup>8</sup> 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/Talbīs%20Iblīs%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.

<sup>9</sup> 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.”

<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup>

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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 *Dimmi*-s in the Fatimid East"; Lutfi, "Coptic Festivals of the Nile."

**12** Brann, *Power in the Portrayal*; al-Ṭurtūshī, *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.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup>

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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 Bahri 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.<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup> 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.

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**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 Islamic world as well.

## Reprehensible Behaviours: Imitating/Inviting Others and Joining Celebrations

### Al-Andalus and the Maghrib

Both Ibn 'Abdūn and 'Umar 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.<sup>22</sup> Concerns about sexual impropriety far outweigh anxiety about religious interactions or borrowings. For example, like the early medieval author, Ibn Ḥabīb, Ibn 'Abdūn 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 'Abdūn prohibits Muslims from performing "vile tasks" (الارذلين) for Jews or Christians, such as massaging them or grooming their animals. Al-Jarsīfī 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.<sup>23</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb implies a danger of incorrect religious behaviour, but does not explicitly associate bathing and "heresy".<sup>24</sup> Ibn 'Abdūn, 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.<sup>25</sup> Al-Jarsīfī is even more circumspect than Ibn 'Abdūn, and merely urges people to cover their genitals at public bathhouses.<sup>26</sup> When Ibn 'Abdūn 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."<sup>27</sup> Ibn 'Abdūn 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.<sup>28</sup>

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

23 al-Jarsīfī, *Risālah*, 123; 'al-Jarsīfī, "Traité de *Ḥisba*," 369.

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

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

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

27 يجب ان يمنع النساء المسلمات دخول الكنائس المشنوعة فان القسيسيين فسقة زناة لوطه; Ibn 'Abdūn, *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 فانهم ياكلن ويشربن ويزنن مع القسيسين; Ibn 'Abdūn, *Risālah*. Ibn 'Abdūn'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 'Abdūn's efforts to discourage Muslims from interacting with Jews and Christians socially, he expresses neither surprise nor *religious* disapproval of Muslim women entering churches.<sup>29</sup> 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-ghurabā'* (*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 'Abdūn's *ḥisba* treatise. The connection between churches and potential sexual liaisons portrayed in early medieval works remains; however, Ibn 'Abdūn 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 'Abdūn does not specify), Muslim presence in churches on other occasions was probably prompted by pious motives as well. Al-'Azafī 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 *Anṣara* 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."<sup>30</sup>

Al-'Azafī is quoting a conversation between earlier sources. Saḥnūn was the ninth-century legal scholar from Qairawan largely responsible for bringing Mālik's *Muwatta'* to North Africa and author of his own influential code, the *Mudawwana*.<sup>31</sup> In the broader context of al-'Azafī'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 *bida'* in order to strengthen his case.<sup>32</sup> This

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"Polemicalizing 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 'Abdūn, see García-Sanjuán, "Jews and Christians in Almoravid Seville"; Fierro, "Christian Success and Muslim Fear."

**30** قلت لسحنون: انهم عندنا اذا كان اعياد النصرارى قالوا للصبيان: جينونا ببيض و هدايا نقليكم الى الكنائس. قال: اي شئ هذا. قلت: مثل الميلاد و العنصرة يقبلونهم و يأخذون منهم الهدايا. قال: هذا بنش الرجل، لا يصلى خلفه و يقدم غيره ان قوا على ذلك. Granja, "Fiestas cristianas en al-Andalus (Materiales para su estudio) I," Arabic, 24, Spanish, 40–41.

**31** His full name was Abū Sa'īd 'Abd al-Salām b. Sa'īd b. Ḥabīb b. Ḥassān b. Hilāl b. Bakkār b. Rabī'a al-Tanūkhī. *El, "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 ‘Abdūn’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 ‘Abdūn 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 *bida’* 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 *bida’*, 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.<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup>

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-

<sup>33</sup> al-Jarsīfī, *Risālah*, 123–24; al-Jarsīfī, “*Traité de Hisba*,” 370.

<sup>34</sup> 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.”<sup>35</sup> Like al-Jarsīfi, 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.<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup> 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.<sup>38</sup> 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.<sup>39</sup> Presumably al-Wansharīsī was attempting to discour-

**35** E remase la dicta usanza fine al tempo presente como se retrova altri motti de feste de Christiani li quali quasi se osservano fin mo, ma lor medesimi non sanno per che causa se fanno una de quelle feste. E in ciascaduna terra se usa de osservare 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 Ifrīqiya 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 *dhimmi*s. 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 ḥadīth collectors, like al-Malik, the progenitor of the legal school to which al-Ṭurṭūshī belonged, or of earlier Andalusī and Maghribī 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.<sup>40</sup> Elsewhere, al-Ṭurṭūshī condemns raising one's hands in invocation at the *minbar* as a Jewish custom.<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup> 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.<sup>43</sup>

So far, al-Ṭurṭūshī's primary concern seems to have been to identify "new" practices not indigenous to Islam.<sup>44</sup> 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

<sup>40</sup> 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-ḥawādith 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.

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

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

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

<sup>44</sup> 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 *ʿīd al-adḥā* (the feast of sacrifice, marking Abraham's willingness to kill a ram instead of his son Ishmael) and *ʿīd 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 *bidaʿ* and luxury.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> 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.

45 من البِدَع اجتماع الناس برياض الاندلس على ابتياع الحلوى ليلة سبع و عشرين من رمضان: و كذلك على اقامة ينير بابيتياع الفواكه كالعجم: و اقامة الغنصرة و خميس ابريل بشراء المجينات و الاسفنج و هي من الاطعمة المبتدعة. و خروج الرجال جميعا او اشتاتا مع النساء مختلطين للتفرج , و كذلك يفعلون في أيام العيد و يخرجون للمصلى. و يقمن فيه الخيم للتفرج لا للصلاة. و دخول الحمام للنساء مع الكتابيات; al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Kitāb al-ḥawādith wa-al-bidaʿ*, 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 estudio) II", esp. 120–24. Compare with Ibn al-Ḥajj, *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 *mawlid al-nabi*.<sup>47</sup> 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.<sup>48</sup> 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.<sup>49</sup> The author further predicts that churches will fall to ruin through disuse, and will be empty during holy days and Sunday.<sup>50</sup> 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.<sup>51</sup>

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

<sup>48</sup> Both John the Baptist and Jesus were recognized as prophets in Islam.

<sup>49</sup> "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'Égypte"; 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.

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

<sup>51</sup> "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.<sup>52</sup>

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.<sup>53</sup> 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.<sup>54</sup> 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* (الملل/אלמלל), 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.<sup>55</sup>

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.<sup>56</sup> 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.<sup>57</sup> The era of Abraham Maimonides is particularly significant for the current discussion,

**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-ʿAdil 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.<sup>58</sup> The author of the letter, asserts that the *al-raʿīs* (אלרייס)<sup>59</sup> “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.”<sup>60</sup> 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*).<sup>61</sup> 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.<sup>62</sup> While the term “*bidaʿ*” is not directly evoked, the “*raʿīs*” 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.<sup>63</sup>

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-

**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 אנה פלאן בן פלאן אנני תעברת בתעבד ללה ותנפל ברכוע וסגוד וצולו פי ביתי ולנסוי לם...; 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.<sup>64</sup> 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.<sup>65</sup> 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.<sup>66</sup> 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.<sup>67</sup> 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."<sup>68</sup> 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.<sup>69</sup> 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.<sup>70</sup> 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.<sup>71</sup> 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.<sup>72</sup> 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.<sup>73</sup>

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-Ṭurtūshī 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-Ṭurtūshī—make beer, and eat special foods.<sup>74</sup> 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.<sup>75</sup> 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*.<sup>76</sup> 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-Ṭurtūshī to support his contention that such behaviour constituted *bida’*.<sup>77</sup> 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, “effeminate” (*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.<sup>78</sup> 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, *Rihlat*, 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-rahā’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-Ṭurtūshī 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 “effeminate” also see Rowson, “The Categorization of Gender and Sexual Irregularity in Medieval Arabic Vice lists,” in *Body Guards*; Rowson, “The Effeminate 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.<sup>79</sup> 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.<sup>80</sup> 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.<sup>81</sup> 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.<sup>82</sup>

The parallels between this Jewish text and later Muslim ones from both Iberia and the Middle East are quite striking. Furthermore, like the Iberian *hisba* 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.<sup>83</sup> Jews nearby, including the synagogue leaders, had evidently felt no such compunction, although they did accept the proposed reforms.<sup>84</sup>

The activities centered around the synagogue of Moses at Dammuh fall between the categories of festival and *ziyāra*.<sup>85</sup> The synagogue was a destination for *ziyāra* because

**79** [... 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 *mawlid*, 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 *mawlid* or other kind of festival, and not all festivals involved *ziyāra* or were *mawlid* (pl. of *mawlid*) 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*.<sup>86</sup> 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.<sup>87</sup> 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-Tifāshī, chose a graveyard as the scene for a sexual encounter between two women.<sup>88</sup> 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*.<sup>89</sup>

Correct behaviour toward the dead and at gravesites had long been a source of contention among Muslims.<sup>90</sup> In contrast to both Muslims and their co-religionists in Christian-ruled Europe, Rabbinic 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-Tifāshī, *Nuzhat al-Albāb*, 238–241; Aḥmad al-Tifāshī, *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, “Traité 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 Taymiya, *Kitāb iqtīdā'*; *Ibn Taymiya'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'Africa*, 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.<sup>91</sup> 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.<sup>92</sup> 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.<sup>93</sup> 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.<sup>94</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, in addition to attributing such behaviours to non-Muslims, went a step further and blamed the Fāṭimids 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*.<sup>95</sup> 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 Sabaeans.<sup>96</sup>

**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 Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtidā'*, 306–407; *Ibn Taymiyya'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 mawāḍi' al-ṣalāt* (Book of Mosques and Places of Prayer) nos. 1181, 1184, 1185, 1186, 1187; Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtidā'*, 322–23, 332–33, 373; *Ibn Taymiyya's Struggle*, 260, 264, 292; Ibn Taymiyya, *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 Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtidā'*, 332–36, 344–45, 375, 383, 439–43, 458; *Ibn Taymiyya's Struggle*, 264–66, 273, 299, 320–21, 325; Ibn Taymiyya, *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 Taymiyya, *Majmū'*, 27:161, 167, 174; Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew*, 100–103. On the *Rāfiḍah*, see El, “*al-Rāfiḍa*”; Kohlberg, “The Term ‘*al-Rāfiḍa*’”; Y. Friedman, *The Nuṣayrī-Alawīs*, 198, 235.

**96** وأهل العلم كلهم يعلمون أنهم لم يكونوا من ولد فاطمة: بل كانوا من ذرية المجوس، وقيل من ذرية يهودي ... باطن دينهم مركب من والصابنيين ودين المجوس والصابنيين; Ibn Taymiyya, *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.<sup>97</sup>

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."<sup>98</sup> 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.<sup>99</sup> Yet his real target is not the Shi'i per se, but rather what he considers to be the wrong kind of *ziyāra*.<sup>100</sup> *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 Taymiyya, *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." Chok, *Zandaqa et Zindiqs*, 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.<sup>101</sup> 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 brings 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?<sup>102</sup>

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 (*ʿīd 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 *ʿīd al-zaytūnah* [Palm Sunday]. On this day the Christians enter a place called *al-Maṭariyah* 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** مشاهدتهم في بعض أعيادهم توجب سرور قلوبهم بما هم عليه من الباطل، خصوصا إذا كانوا مقهورين تحت ذل الجزية والصغار. فإنهم يرون المسلمين قد صاروا فرعا لهم في خصائص دينهم. فإن ذلك يوجب قوة قلوبهم وانشراح صدورهم. وربما أطمعهم ذلك في انتهاز الفرص؛ واستذلال الضعفاء. وهذا أيضا أمر محسوس لا يستريب فيه عاقل فكيف يجتمع ما يقتضى إكرامهم بلا موجب، مع شرع الصغار في حقهم؟ Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtidāʾ*, 219; *Ibn Taymiyya’s Struggle*, 216. My translation differs slightly from Memon’s.



their husbands to go shopping among the Christians, a request that the husbands readily oblige.<sup>107</sup> 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.<sup>108</sup> 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.”<sup>109</sup> 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.<sup>110</sup>

Slightly earlier, he specifies that Christians and Muslims do these activities for their children.<sup>111</sup> 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.”<sup>112</sup> 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-

**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** فيشتري لأولاده القصب، و الشمع، و القصب، و الحطب أو ما يناسبه و يطرح في 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 في مثل هذا الخميس الذي هو عند الكفار عيد المائدة—آخر خميس في صوم النصارى الذي يسمونه الخميس الكبير، و هو الخميس الحقيق—يجتمعون في أماكن اجتماعات عظيمة. ويصيغون البيض، و يطبخون اللبن، و يتكثرون بالحمرة دوابهم. و يصطنعون الاطعمة التي لا تكاد تفعل في عيد الله و رسوله، و يتهدون الهدايا التي تكون في مثل مواسم الحج؛ Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtidā'*, 215; *Ibn Taymiyya'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 Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtidā'*, 214; *Ibn Taymiyya's Struggle*, 212.

**112** غير أن يتعبدوا بتلك العادة المحدثه؛ Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtidā'*, 209; *Ibn Taymiyya's Struggle*, 207. This passage is quoted in fuller form in the introduction.

cation thereafter.<sup>113</sup> Muslims had to be reminded not to adopt the practices of Jews or Christians on their respective Sabbaths.<sup>114</sup> Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya 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.<sup>115</sup> 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.<sup>116</sup> 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.<sup>117</sup> 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 *ʿĀshūrā'*, Ibn Taymiyya dwells upon the reputed Jewish origins of the holiday.<sup>118</sup> 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'ī.<sup>119</sup> Lest his readers doubt the condemnable nature of some of the practices surrounding *ʿĀshūrā'*, he also associates them with “satans” and *dajjāl*, the Muslim equivalent of the Antichrist.<sup>120</sup> Linking festivals with “satans” or the *dajjāl* in combination with *dhimmi* or Shi'ī 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 Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtidā'*, 135, 196–98, 262–67; *Ibn Taymiyya'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 Taymiyya, *Majmū'*, 25:310–11, however, also see 303, 309 where he blames *dhimmi* more generally for incorrect practices during *ʿĀshūrā'*. Compare with Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtidā'*, 86–87, 171–77, 214; *Ibn Taymiyya's Struggle*, 150–51, 186–89, 212–13. The entire discussion of *ʿĀshūrā'* 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 *ʿĀshūrā'* 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 Taymiyya, *Majmū'*, 25:301–2. Compare with Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtidā'*, 300–301; *Ibn Taymiyya'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'*.<sup>121</sup> 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.<sup>122</sup> Accidental encounters with churches, or going to churches or monasteries in order to buy goods and nothing else are acceptable.<sup>123</sup> 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.<sup>124</sup> 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.

**121** On the association of *Āshūrā'* with the Day of Atonement see *EI*, "*Āshūrā'*"; Fierro, "Celebration of 'Āshūrā' 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 Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtidā'*, 199–202; *Ibn Taymiyya's Struggle*, 203–4; Chrysostomides, "There Is No Harm in It."

**123** Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtidā'*, 227–28, 337; *Ibn Taymiyya'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.<sup>125</sup> 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.<sup>126</sup> 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."<sup>127</sup> 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-

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

<sup>126</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtidā'*, 202–3; *Ibn Taymiyya's Struggle*, 204–5.

<sup>127</sup> إياكم و رطانة الاعاجم وأن تدخلوا على المشركين عيدهم في كناستهم Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb iqtidā'*, 199; *Ibn Taymiyya'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-Nafisa. 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 *jāhiliya*. 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.<sup>128</sup>

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.<sup>129</sup> Here, however, Muslims are attending churches and synagogues or monasteries and taking vows there.<sup>130</sup> 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

وأشد بلاء من الأول: سعى المسلم لزيارة رهبانهم، والتبرك بقرصهم: من أين تأتي البركة في هذا الطعام، وصاحبه قد باء بغضب الملك العلام، وقد برىء من دين الإسلام، وهو عدو للنبي عليه السلام؟ والمسلم المغرور هو الذي ينذر، للكنائس أو البيع، النذر. وهذا بدعة محرمة، لا ترضى المولى الغفور. ولا يجوز النذر إلا للست نفيسة. فما بالك بالنذر للدبورة والبيع والكنيسة. فمن سافر من فسقة المسلمين مع هذه الطائفة الملعونة إلى أعيادهم ومواسمهم، فنفته غير مخلوقة لخروجه عن الشرع، ولخوله في هذا الأمور المخيفة. فتتقص دنياه ويسقط من عين الله. فإن مات أحدهم في البر، مات ميتة جاهلية. وإن مات في البحر، فيبتلى بالغرق في الدنيا، وبالعذاب في الآخرة. وإن كان ماشياً، فالخطأ كلها خطأ. لأنه تعرب وهاجر في رضى الشيطان، وفي شيء 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-kanīṣah*) 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-Nafisa. Sayyida Nafisa, or Sitt al-Nafisa (Nafisa 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.<sup>131</sup> 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

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**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.<sup>132</sup>

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.<sup>133</sup> 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-

ومن مدح أحد من الرهبان، فهو بعيد الشبه من السنة، ومن أهل الخير والايمان، وقد يتفق لبعض الرهبان—لكثرة رياضته—شئ من 132 المكاشفة: يتولد من الجوع نور. وتكون تلك المكاشفة استدرجا لهذا الملعون، وضللا لكل جاهل ومفتون. قال الله سبحانه: سنستدرجهم من حيث لا يعلمون... ثم اعلم بأن المكاشفة بعيدة ممن قد أعمى الله قلبه، وتقع مصادفة، كما يتفق لبعض. وقد تكون ملعنة وخبائة، ليضلوا بها قلوب الغافلين، وليسقطوا العباد بزيارتهم، وبالاقبال عليهم من رحمة العالمين: لأن اللعنة اذا نزلت عليهم، أصابت من جالسهم. ويجب على ولي الامر زجر من ظهر من الرهبان، وغيرهم من أهل الكفر والطغيان بشئ من هذه الفتن، والملعنة واللائمة فهي—الله—حسنة عظيمة، يلقاها العبد يوم الحاجة والفاقة أمامه. فان قدر ولم يأمره بصير في حسرة عظيمة وندامة. وما توكدت هذه الإفاة وغيرها في الملة المحمدية الا من جهة التهاون في إزالتها حين ظهورها، وتأخيرها من ساعاتها وسنيها وشهورها، وتهاون المسلمون أيضا في هذه الطائفة الضالة الملعونة. فأظهرت أعيادها ومواسمها على رؤس الأشهاد. وما اكتفوا بذلك حتى طافوا بصلبانهم في بعض البلاد. وأظهر من ترهب منهم شيئا يضل به العباد: حتى صار جماعة من جهلة المسلمين يتركون بدعاء الرهبان وبقرصهم، وبصليبيهم، وبضوعونه فوق الجرون. ولا يفعل هذه البدعة الا كل مدبر مفتون: لأن النصرارى قد خسروا بكنبيهم على الله تعالى الدنيا والاخرة، وهم لا يشعرون. فان بورك لأحدهم في دنياهم فهو مازقه؛ الله في الاجل. فالرزق لا يزيد بطاعة أحد ولا بكفره. فتق بربك يا بعيد الأمل، ولا 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.<sup>134</sup> 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.<sup>135</sup> 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.<sup>136</sup> 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 Labīb, 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.<sup>137</sup>

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.<sup>138</sup> 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.<sup>139</sup> 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"; Praver, *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 *'īd al-ghīṭas* (Epiphany) or *'īd 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.<sup>140</sup> 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.<sup>141</sup> 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.

## UPHOLDING THE DIGNITY OF THE FAITH AND SEPARATING BELIEVERS AND UNBELIEVERS IN MEDIEVAL CHRISTIAN SOCIETIES

### Introduction

The opposition to shared practices in the Islamic world examined in the previous chapter, was, for the most part, directed at actual behaviour by Jews, Christians, and Muslims. This impression is upheld by ample descriptions of these customs by members of multiple communities, both in favour and against. This is not to say that the representation of these practices was not shaped by the agendas of their authors, but the prohibitions and rhetoric in anti-*bida'* treatises, *responsa*, and *fatāwā* were designed to prevent and/or (re)shape the actions and understanding of their authors' co-religionists regarding these mixed practices. By contrast, imagined Jewish behaviour or imitation of Jewish behaviour are themes which pervade Western European, Byzantine, and Armenian legal sources and polemic. Thus, in analyzing oppositional literature in Christian lands, the category of "shared" practices, is, at times, entirely a rhetorical one. The ways in which "imagined" Jewish practice or shared ritual functioned in Western Europe vs. Byzantium and Armenia were quite different however. In Western Europe, the language of legal discourse and literary representation became entangled, one mirroring the other in depicting Jews (and devils) as a disruptive and disrespectful presence during Christian holy days and history. Legal, literary and dramatic depictions of Jews and Muslims participating in and/or mocking Christian rituals and concomitant objections to the same in Western Europe were responses to real situations of Jewish or Muslim interaction with Christians, even if the representations of those interactions were shaped by Christian anxieties. They were also directed at Jews and/or Muslims or at the Christian authorities responsible for regulating Jewish and Muslim behaviour. Latin Christian law, rhetoric, and ritual regarding Jewish and Muslim participation in or mockery of Christian ritual, and use of Christian servants prompted Jews to justify or regulate these interactions, and, to develop counter-rhetoric and rituals, which served as a hidden transcript of resistance against the requirement to participate in papal processions or ritualized violence against the Jewish community.<sup>1</sup> Muslims may have done the same, but as yet no documentation of Muslim counter-rhetoric or ritual has come to light.

In contrast to what one finds in Western Europe, Byzantine and Armenian Christian depictions of Christians imitating Jewish rituals are predominantly directed at other Christians whom a given author found problematic. Although some other, seemingly Christian, groups were also targeted, the primary focus of these accusations was,

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<sup>1</sup> Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 7–9, 48–49; Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*.

in fact, contested doctrinal differences between the Armenian, Byzantine, and Western European Churches, as expressed, or imagined to have been expressed, in a select set of rituals.<sup>2</sup> In discussions of “Judaizing” Christian communities in Asia Minor, the polemical agenda is so strong that without additional or autochthonous testimonies, determining whether there were any actual connections or shared practices between Christians and Jews or Muslims remains tentative, at best.<sup>3</sup> While indications of Jewish populations in Armenian territories are anecdotal and scattered, substantial, and often thriving Jewish communities existed in Byzantine lands.<sup>4</sup> Despite the long-standing presence of a Jewish population, or perhaps because of it, Byzantine prohibitions against Jewish-Christian socializing largely repeat older legislation without further elaborations indicating new anxieties or developments, except in so far as to draw parallels between Jewish and Armenian or Latin Christian practice. These assertions of Judaizing divorced from living Jews are relevant to a study of shared practices because the accusations are constructed around the imitation of another’s sacred rituals, so that such imitation is a core element of the polemic itself. In western medieval Europe, “hermeneutical” Judaism, namely the use of the concept or (biblical) history of Jews to comment on Christian behaviour, or “spectral” Judaism, in which Jews, though absent, affected Christian society through Christians’ fantasies about them, took a number of forms. These included: the evocation of biblical stories about the Israelites (through the lens of Christian interpretations of them) to comment (positively or negatively) on aspects of Christian behaviour; descriptions of feared Jewish behaviour linked to that of Christians the better to condemn those Christians or “heretics”; the use of parallel animal symbolism in which animals traditionally associated with Jews were then linked (usually unfavourably) to some Christian(s), or the corporeal characteristics; attributing the eating habits or purity status of Jews to certain Christians as a form of chastisement.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, while spectral Judaism in Western Europe may have targeted Jewish ritual, especially Passover/Easter, accusations of shared practices were not the only, or even the primary form of this type of polemic. Armenian and Byzantine hermeneutical or spectral uses of Jews, on the other hand, were especially ritual-centred.<sup>6</sup> Thus, these accusations and legal regulations formally resemble what we have seen in other Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities’ discourses about

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2 Ohanjanyan, “Armenian–Jewish Connections”; Siecienski, *Beards, Azymes, and Purgatory*; Gardette, “The Judaizing Christians”; Kolbaba, “East Roman Anti-Armenian Polemic”; Kolbaba, “Byzantines, Armenians and Latins”; Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists*; Smith, *And Taking Bread*, 115, 138–39, 148, 153–55, 174–83.

3 Gardette, “The Judaizing Christians.”

4 Stone and Tochyan, *Jews in Ancient and Medieval Armenia*; Holo, *Byzantine Jewry*.

5 Krummel, *Crafting Jewishness*; Krueger, *The Spectral Jew*; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 201, 210–12, Tomasch, “Postcolonial Chaucer”; Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*; Lipton, *Images of Intolerance*, 82–111.

6 On Armenian expressions of hermeneutical or spectral Judaism see Ohanjanyan, “Armenian–Jewish Connections”; Pogossian, “Gli ebrei e il giudaismo nelle fonte armene”; Pogossian, “Jews in Armenian Apocalyptic Traditions”; Garsoïan, *Paulician Heresy*.

shared practices, but stand somewhat apart, because the connection between accusations of Christian imitation or participation in Jewish practices and actual socialization between Christians and Jews is very thin. Injunctions to avoid imitating Jews, in Byzantine and Armenian texts, were designed to denigrate a particular behaviour and shame members of the author's own community into abandoning it. Alternatively, accusations of Judaizing rituals served to mark one another (Armenians, Byzantines) or other Christian groups, as undesirable. In both cases, "Jewishness" is an internal, Christian tool. Among those studied so far, Byzantine and Armenian authors were not the only ones to use imitation of another community's practices as a form of intra-religious insult and regulation. For example, Sunni Muslims targeted Shi'a Muslims and women by accusing them of adopting the practices of Jews and Christians.<sup>7</sup> The predominance of this kind of discourse, however, suggests that intra-Christian difference was more threatening and a greater priority to Byzantines and Armenians than the regulation of real-life Jewish-Christian interaction, whereas the latter was imperative to Western Christians, even when that regulation was also imbued with a certain degree of fantasy on the part of Christian authorities.

Byzantine and Armenian objections to Muslim participation in Christian rituals, on the other hand, seem to be rooted in actual interactions between Muslims and both of these Christian communities. I argue that Byzantine refusal to recognize that Muslims and Christians worshipped the same God, and strict prohibitions against allowing non-Christians into churches, and, in the case of Armenians, purity prohibitions regarding non-Christian presence or touch of sacred objects inhibited the development of shared religious practice between Muslims and these Christian communities. This legal trajectory set Byzantine and Armenian Christians apart not only from other Christians, including Eastern Christian communities but also Muslims and Jews.<sup>8</sup> Byzantine and Armenian accounts of Muslims seeking baptism for their children need to be examined in the context of similar accounts by Muslims and Western Christians in Egypt and the Levant. Tentatively, I would suggest that for Muslims and Christians alike, baptism, particularly bathing in certain pools, was understood to have an apotropaic effect, a belief which Christians from all regions attribute to Muslims, while assigning more lofty theological motives to members of their own community.

What should become apparent in the pages which follow, is that Latin, Byzantine, and Armenian Church authorities struggled to insist that local lay people, priests, and rulers follow the restrictions laid out regarding interactions with non-Christians, often to no avail. Indeed, by the late early modern period, attitudes had changed enough among Armenian church authorities, that they embraced certain similarities between themselves, Jews, and Muslims, and challenged Catholics for not following the same regulations. Evidence of shared practice increases, but further research is needed to confirm the nature and extent of these, an endeavour that is beyond the scope of this book.

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7 Cuffel, "From Practice to Polemic" and Chapter 5 of this book.

8 On this see Chapter 4 of this book.

## Giving Gifts and Mocking Holy Days: Real and Imagined Shared Practices in Latin Europe

The repetition and adaptation of older prohibitions in western canon law may have been especially pertinent to Iberia and southern Italy where Christians had regular contact with Muslims as well as Jews, but such concerns were not limited to Mediterranean lands. Socialization between Christians and Jews was an issue throughout most of Europe, and certain regions, like medieval Hungary, with its combination of Christians, Jews, Muslims, and Cumans, were viewed by the Church as problematic for many of the same reasons as Mediterranean lands inhabited by populations with a high level of religious diversity.<sup>9</sup> Building new or repairing old synagogues or mosques was often forbidden, though exceptions were also made or regulations circumvented.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the papacy and Christian polities sought both to protect Jewish and Muslim buildings and rituals from Christian violence, while at the same time taking measures against Muslim and Jewish mockery of Christian festivals.<sup>11</sup> Papal and other decrees regularly prohibited Christians from being servants of Jews and, where relevant, Muslims, and condemned or even excommunicated Christians who served in Jewish homes and were supported by Jews.<sup>12</sup> What I will argue in this section is that while Christian authorities attempted to impose laws, both old and new, to limit shared practices and even conversion between Christians and Jewish and Muslim minorities, at the same time, these prohibitions frequently serve as significant testimony to the extent of shared practices between Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Europe. Christians increasingly suspected Jews and, to a lesser extent, Muslims, of actively luring or compelling Christians, especially Christian servants, into adopting their rituals. Instructions that Jews or Muslims remain inside with closed windows during Holy Week were simultaneously a measure to protect religious minorities from Christian violence, and an attempt to curtail both Jewish and Muslim participation in Christian religious events, and the mockery and even violence which Christians imagined Jews (and Muslims) would direct at Christians and their festivals. Part of Christians' fear, I will suggest, derived from the assumption that Jewish behaviour during their holidays would mirror that of the Christians; just as Christian celebration entailed ritual violence and mockery of Jews, so too, they supposed, must Jewish celebration of their holy days or reaction to Christians' rituals, consist of mockery and violence.

Turning to Jewish and Muslim sources from Latin Europe, leaders also sometimes sought to prevent cross-religious associations during holidays. Jews and Muslims

**9** Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom*, 74–108, 149–89.

**10** Grayzel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 1:106/107, 2:107, 108, 109; *Alfonso X and the Jews*, pp. 30–31; Riera i Sans, *Els poders públics i les sinagogues*; Assis, *Golden Age*, 210–13; Echevarria, *City of Three Mosques*, 107–10.

**11** Grayzel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 1:92/93, 308/309, 316–19, 332/333, 2:56, 71, 107–10, 140; *Alfonso X and the Jews*, 30–31; Novikoff, "Plateas Publice Discurrentes?"; Cohen, *Christ Killers*, 62.

**12** Grayzel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 1:296/297, 300/301, 330/331, 2:107–8; *Alfonso X and the Jews*, 34. Echevarria, *The City of Three Mosques*, 120.

adapted their laws and practices to accommodate the limitations imposed upon them by Christian law. On occasion, new rituals developed as a direct reaction to Christian practice and expectation. However, some of their practices, like gift-giving on Purim, allowed for the inclusion of non-Jews, and these behaviours were misconstrued by Christian authorities as an attempt to lure Christians to Judaism.

### Legal Background

The legal status of Jews in medieval Western Europe, whether according to church law or local, secular laws, has long captured the attention of scholars.<sup>13</sup> The basis of some of these laws go back to early codes and canons, though in Byzantium and Western Europe the Theodosian Code (439 CE) offered a working foundation.<sup>14</sup> Thereafter, for the early period, Pope Gregory the Great (ca. 540–604 CE) is significant for promulgating laws against undue pressure to convert to Christianity, or Jewish ownership of Christian slaves, and for equitable treatment of Jewish converts to Christianity, the protection of Jewish property, and affirming their continued licit status according to Roman law. He also sought to regulate as well as protect Jewish behaviour in the synagogue, issuing one of the first decrees beginning with the phrase “Sicut Iudaeis non...”, a phrase which was to be repeated by numerous subsequent lawmakers in specifying the rights and restrictions of Jews under ecclesiastical law in Catholic-controlled Europe.<sup>15</sup> Analyses of the legal status of Muslims under Western Christian rule are substantial in number but still fewer in comparison to similar studies on the status of Jews. Generally, before the fourth Lateran Council (1215), Muslims were designated as “Pagani” or “Sarraceni”, and were treated as political, not religious enemies.<sup>16</sup> The terminology largely follows that of eastern Christian communities in their legal discussions of proper interactions with

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**13** Champagne and Resnick, *Jews and Muslims under the Fourth Lateran Council*; Foschia et al., eds., *Jews in Early Christian Law*; Freidenreich, *Foreigners and their Food*, 107–26; Stow, *Popes, Church and Jews in the Middle Ages*; Abulafia, “The Servitude of Jews and Muslims”; García y García, “Jews and Muslims in the Canon Law of the Iberian Peninsula”; Pakter, *Medieval Canon Law and the Jews*; Synan, *The Popes and the Jews*.

**14** Champagne and Resnick, *Jews and Muslims under the Fourth Lateran Council.*; Hartmann and Pennington, *History of Byzantine Canon and Eastern Canon Law*, 28–30, 44–49, 125–26; Foschia et al., eds., *Jews in Early Christian Law*; Linder, “The Legal Status of the Jews”; Linder, *Jews in the Legal Sources*.

**15** Synan, *The Popes and the Jews*, pp. 40–49.

**16** Szpiech, “Saracens and Church Councils”; Echevarria, “The Marks of the Other”; Freidenreich, *Foreigners and their Food*, 203–8; Freidenreich, “Muslims in Western Canon Law”; Freidenreich, “Muslims in Canon Law, 650–1000”; Constable, “Regulating Noise”; Jaspert, “Zeichen und Symbole”; Metcalfe, *Muslims of Medieval Italy*, 112–21, 150–54, 170–71, 266–72; Nader, “Urban Muslims, Latin Laws”; Burns, “Jews and Moors in the Siete Partidas”; Abulafia, “Servitude of Jews and Muslims”; Herde, “Christians and Saracens at the Time of the Crusade”; Echevarria, “Política y Religión frente al Islam”; Kedar, “De iudeis et sarracenis”; García y García, “Jews and Muslims in the Canon Law”; García y García, “Judíos y moros en el ordenamiento canónico medieval”; Bussi, “La condizione giuridicadel musulmani ne diritto canonico.”

Muslims.<sup>17</sup> The use of the first of these terms can make identifying when a law code is actually referring to Muslims somewhat challenging.

The crusades and the movement toward greater codification of canon law in Western Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries certainly affected the legal status of Jews and Muslims under Christian rule in Europe; however, John Gilchrist warns against seeing these as drastic shifts from earlier church law. He argues that the increased regulatory tendencies toward Jews evident in Gratian's *Decretum* (ca. 1141 CE) and subsequent legislation were already present in the early eleventh centuries, and that many of these canon collections, like that of Burchard of Worms (d. 1025 CE), continued to remain popular and circulate, often to a greater degree than Gratian's *Decretum*.<sup>18</sup> Many of the laws or papal decrees, predictably, were designed to maintain what Christians considered to be the appropriate hierarchy between Christians and Jews. A good example of this tendency is the letter of Pope Gregory VII (ca. 1015–1085, became pope in 1073 CE) to King Alfonso VI of Castile-Leon, which castigates the king for allowing Jews to hold authority over Christians.<sup>19</sup> Others, however, sought to protect Jews from persecution or forced conversion. Nevertheless, the push toward more systematic codification in general during Pope Gregory VII's reform, also targeted Jews and worked toward eliminating avenues for conversion, socializing, etc.<sup>20</sup> Likewise for Muslims, or "Saracens," there were efforts to restrict fraternizing between Muslims and Christians, and Christian military support to Muslims, as well as to protect Muslim converts to Christianity in eleventh century local and papal law. By the Third Lateran Council (1179) Muslims were more frequently mentioned explicitly and grouped with Jews, a trend that continued through the Fourth Lateran Council, which scholars have often seen as a major shifting point for Christian ecclesiastical legislation regarding religious minorities. Central to that shift was Pope Innocent III, who composed a number of letters and rulings which attempted to curtail socialization between Christians, Jews, and Muslims, and to control more strictly Jewish and Muslim behaviour in their religious buildings and homes relative to Christians. As a number of scholars have pointed out, this legislation by Innocent III (ca. 1160/1–1216 CE, r. 1198–1216), culminating with the Fourth Lateran Council, constituted a hardening of papal policy toward the Jews and Muslims generally.<sup>21</sup>

Recently however, researchers have begun to see Lateran IV as a consolidation and application of earlier legislation, rather than a drastic shift in church policy.<sup>22</sup> Further-

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17 Szpiech, "Saracens and Church Councils."

18 Gilchrist, "Perceptions of the Jews in Canon Law."

19 Gilchrist, "Perceptions of the Jews in Canon Law"; Synan, *The Popes and the Jews*, 65.

20 Gilchrist, "Perceptions of the Jews in Canon Law."

21 Cuffel, "Seductive Sounds"; Champagne and Resnick, *Jews and Muslims under the Fourth Lateran Council*; Tolan, "Of Blood and Milk"; Cohen, "Pope Innocent III, Christian Wet Nurses and the Jews"; Chazan, "Pope Innocent III and the Jews"; Pakter, *Medieval Canon Law and the Jews*, 63; Synan, *The Popes and the Jews*, 83–102.

22 Szpiech, "Saracens and Church Councils"; Kedar, "De iudeis et sarracenis"; and more generally *Jews and Muslims under the Fourth Lateran Council*; Gilchrist, "Perceptions of the Jews in Canon Law."

more, as Ana Echevarria emphasizes, local and papal law were not identical; indeed, often, royal or local ecclesiastical legislation regarding minorities in Iberia was far more extensive and detailed than papal degrees. This greater level of detail in local law makes sense since this region, along with Sicily, was one of the few to have a substantial Muslim as well as Jewish population. Nor did papal law have jurisdiction over all Muslim populations under Christian rule in Iberia. Also, while Jews and Muslims were frequently bound by the same regulations, there were times when regulations about the two groups differed, or rather certain areas of regulation, such as those dealing with usury or conversion, were discussed and applied more to Jews than to Muslims. Furthermore, rulers in Iberia resisted applying aspects of Lateran IV to varying degrees, and the integration of canon law into local custom and ecclesiastical regulations, or royal policy, thus varied between kingdoms in Iberia. There was, however, an incremental rapprochement between royal law in Iberia and Lateran IV in the thirteenth-century.<sup>23</sup> Ryan Szpiech and Ana Echevarria both suggest that the Council of Vienne (1313–1314 CE) and some of the legislation leading up to it which dealt with Muslims was more significant than the Fourth Lateran.<sup>24</sup> In addition to being more restrictive toward Muslim–Christian interaction, these laws also addressed issues specific to current encounters between Muslims and Christians, including but not exclusive to the problem of Christians overhearing the Muslim call to prayer.<sup>25</sup>

What is significant for the current work, is that while canon law in Latin Europe repeated older legislation designed to prevent or discourage Christians from socializing with, being employed by, or joining the festivals of Jews and later, Muslims, concern about these issues increased from the eleventh through the fourteenth centuries. Local needs and customs had substantial sway over the application of papal and other ecclesiastical decrees designed to regulate these behaviours. Laws were expanded to include socialization between Christians and Muslims, in part to reflect the reality of the rise in the number of Muslims under Christian rule and the concomitant apprehension which that situation provoked. Legislation about the Jews also reflected Christian concerns. Thus, as we have seen in chapter three and will see further in this chapter, these regulations were not supernumerary repetitions of irrelevant legislation dealing with long-defunct issues of interreligious interaction. Rather, they reflected real anxieties, such as those over conversion, or breaches in preferred behaviour of religious minorities (at least from the perspective of the papal see) during festivals and holy days.

Jews and Muslims living under Christian rule were likewise concerned with policing the boundaries between their own community and Christians. Some Muslim legalists insisted that Muslims living under non-Muslim rule should leave in order to settle in Muslim polities.<sup>26</sup> Yet many Muslims were unable or unwilling to leave their homes,

**23** Echevarria, “The Marks of the Other.”

**24** Szpiech, “Saracens and Church Councils”; Echevarria, “The Marks of the Other.”

**25** Szpiech, “Saracens and Church Councils”; Echevarria, “The Marks of the Other”; Dohm-van Rossum, “Campanile und Minarett”; Constable, “Regulating Noise”; Jaspert, “Religious Movements in Mudéjar Communities”; Jaspert, “Zeichen und Symbole.”

**26** Verskin, *Islamic Law and the Crisis of the Reconquista*; Miller, “Muslim Minorities.”

despite being under Christian rule. Muslims living under Iberian Christian rule drew from standard collections of Muslim law but also adapted these to suit their own circumstances and wrote new legal guides, such as the one by the fifteenth-century Segovian jurist, Yça Jabīr, which provided guidelines for navigating interreligious relations under Christian rule.<sup>27</sup>

As Talya Fishman has demonstrated, North African and Andalusī Jewish legal thinkers emphasized the importance of orality and traditions of interpretation, and rejected the notion that the Talmud could be used as a direct source of law, although some complained that students attempted to use the Talmud in this way. Sephardi legal traditions after Christian conquest continued in this vein. Jewish leaders and legal thinkers from Christian-ruled Iberia eschewed dependence on the Talmud if it went against Gaonic and custom-based interpretation of the law, and much of the production of legal literature was focused on the creation of legal compendia, of which the *Mishnah Torah* may be seen as an example.<sup>28</sup> Moses Maimonides was both very much a product of the legal cultures of medieval (Muslim-ruled) Iberia and North Africa and an influence on subsequent legal thinkers of Christian-ruled Iberia, as well as other parts of the European Mediterranean and in Northern Europe. While the reception of his legal code, *Mishnah Torah*, was not without criticism, the potential impact of his interpretation of laws dealing with non-Jews needs to be kept in mind.<sup>29</sup> Yet as we have already seen in the case of charity to non-Jews, European Jews sometimes differed in practice from their more eastern neighbours, even when the basic principle was accepted.<sup>30</sup> Thus, attention to local difference in Jewish legal practice and the symbolic significance attributed to those practices are paramount in assessing their potential impact on Jewish relations with Christians or Muslims in a given region.<sup>31</sup>

### Christian Servants and the Adoption of Jewish or Muslim Ritual

In later medieval prohibitions against Jews and Muslims having Christian servants or slaves, fear that Jews and Muslims would encourage these servants/slaves to celebrate Jewish or Muslim rituals, and even worse, convert occasionally, appears as a reason for these laws. For example, Pope Gregory IX writing to church officials in German speaking lands (Theutonium) in 1233 complains that Jews made Christian servants adopt Jewish rites. In this he was drawing from very early precedents, in this case, the Council

**27** Echevarria, "Food as Custom"; Echevarria, *The City of Three Mosques*, 79, 97–98, 141–42; Wieggers, *Islamic Literature in Spanish and Aljamiado*, 115–33.

**28** Fishman, *Becoming the People of the Talmud*, 65–90, 155–67.

**29** Fishman, *Becoming the People of the Talmud*, 74–75, 83, 84–85, 159–60; Twersky, *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides*, 30–37, 43–47, 147–48, 402–6, 452–70, 518–37; Septimus, *Meir Abulafia and the Maimonidean Controversy*; Silver, *Maimonidean Criticism*, 69–108.

**30** For a discussion of charity to non-Jews and relevant literature, see Chapter 4.

**31** See for example, Micha Perry's analysis of practices of and attitudes toward circumcision in various parts of Europe and the Byzantine Empire; Perry, "Byzantium's Role in the Transmission of Jewish Knowledge."

of Toledo of 589 CE.<sup>32</sup> First Honorius III and then Gregory IX expressed the same alarm at Christians slaves and poor in Hungary adopting the rituals of Muslims and, to a lesser extent, Jews and sometimes converting, either freely out of envy for the more comfortable situation of Muslims or Jews, or because they were pressed into doing so by their masters.<sup>33</sup>

Expecting servants or slaves to follow the regulations of diet and basic religious guidelines was common, indeed, part of the reason slaves were expected to convert according to Jewish law, was to ensure that they could be trusted to know and follow Jewish law as they served the family. Ideally according to Jewish law, slaves should be converted to Judaism within one year or resold.<sup>34</sup> In the past, scholars have maintained that conversion to Judaism or active Jewish proselytization was rare during the Middle Ages, whether in Europe or Islamic lands, because of prohibitions against it.<sup>35</sup> Recent scholarship has demonstrated that in Muslim-ruled lands, Jews actively encouraged or expected non-Jewish slaves to convert to Judaism, and that free Christian conversions to Judaism were not uncommon in the Middle East, since most schools of Islamic law did not prohibit conversion from one *dhimmi* religion to another.<sup>36</sup> In Europe the situation was more difficult, since prohibitions against abandoning Christianity in favour of another religion were stringent and entailed harsh punishment. Nevertheless, Paola Tartakoff has demonstrated that, for the high Middle Ages as well as the ninth to eleventh centuries, Christians did occasionally convert to Judaism and Jews had specific rituals for such occasions and strategies for assisting such individuals, even if doing so could be quite dangerous for both parties.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, she argues that during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries religious and some secular authorities became especially preoccupied with cases of Christian conversion to Judaism and accused Jews of actively “seducing” Christians from the true faith, or even more nefarious, of kidnap-

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**32** Grayzel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 1:198/199.

**33** Grayzel, 1:172/173 208/209; Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom*, 110–11, 152–53; Tartakoff, *Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder*, 29,31, 101. Christian lawmakers expressed similar concerns about Muslim slaves of Jews, or even free Jews or Muslims who elected to convert to one another’s religion. See Grayzel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 1:324/325; *Alfonso X and the Jews*, 97. On Muslim concubines and slaves of Jews in Christian lands, see Asis, *Golden Age*, 265–67.

**34** Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 1:136–37; Tartakoff, *Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder*, 73.

**35** Segal, “Conversion to Judaism.”

**36** Cuffel, “Conversion and Religious Polemic”; Yagur, “Religious Identity”; Perry, “Conversion as an Aspect of Master–Slave Relationships”; Perry, “Daily Life of Slaves”; Friedman, *Jewish Polygyny*, 32–34, 291–339. On Islamic law on this topic see Yagur, “Religious Identity,” 6–7, 25–27.

**37** Tartakoff, *Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder*, 70–98. For examples of earlier European Christian conversions to Judaism see Chapter 4 and Colafemmina, “La conversion al giudaismo di Andrea arcivescovo di Bari”; Löwe, “Die Apostasie des Pfazdiakons Bodo (838)”; Blumenkranz, “La conversion au judaïsme d’André”; Blumenkranz, “Un pamphlet juif médio-latin”; Blumenkranz, “De nouveau sur Bodo-Eleazar?”

ping Christian children for the purposes of circumcising them and converting them to Judaism.<sup>38</sup> Christian authorities made similar accusations against Muslims.<sup>39</sup>

Concomitant with these charges was the accusation that they induced Christians to follow Jewish (or Muslim) ritual. These two claims are related but cannot always be assumed to be identical. As noted, having servants adopt Jewish ritual was grounded in practical necessity, however, whereas in the Islamic world, discussions of what slaves may or may not do in a Jewish household are usually couched in the expectation that the slave was already Jewish or would be soon, in Europe this expectation does not seem to have been the norm.<sup>40</sup> One may see this difference and the difficulties of having a non-Jewish servant in a Jewish household quite well in a *responsum* by the Aragonese legal expert, Solomon b. Abraham ibn Adret (1235–1310 CE). Ibn Adret states that uncircumcised servants may not engage in activities forbidden to Jews and he outlines various legal opinions about whether or not food prepared by such servants was permissible, especially in regard to wine and cheese. Ultimately he decides against the kashrut of these foods if prepared by an uncircumcised (i.e. Christian) servant.<sup>41</sup>

What is clear in this Jewish text is that Christian servants regularly worked in Jewish homes—Ibn Adret treats this as a commonplace—however, their non-Jewish status limited their usefulness for their Jewish masters. Here there is no discussion of the conversion so feared in Christian legal texts.<sup>42</sup> However, what is also evident, is that despite these servants not being fully integrated into the Jewish household, they were expected to abide by certain Jewish laws. This regulation would be in part to protect the servant (from the Jewish perspective) and prevent Jews from violating the Torah by proxy. A similar dilemma and set of tensions is evident in a *responsum* by the earlier, influential northern biblical and Talmudic commentator, Shlomo b. Yitzḥaq of Troyes (1040–1105 CE), also known as Rashi:

There was a gentile serving woman who used the unleavened bread of Passover for her own need without separating an offering or measuring it. It was asked of the rabbi and he said, it happens during this time that people follow

**38** Tartakoff, *Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder*, 18–58.

**39** Tartakoff, *Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder*, 29–33, 39–40.

**40** Cuffel, “Conversion and Religious Polemic”; Perry, “Daily Life of Slaves.” Tartakoff asserts that Jews in Europe did convert their slaves, although this seems to have been a sporadic occurrence rather than an automatic event. Tartakoff, *Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder*, 6, 23–24, 27, 73.

**41** Ibn Adret, *She’elot ve Teshuvot*, pt. 1 sign 68 (סח). Accessed through the Bar Ilan Database and through Relmin, [www.cn-telma.fr//relmin/extrait252566/](http://www.cn-telma.fr//relmin/extrait252566/). Accessed 27 February 2020. Compare with Ibn Adret, *She’elot ve Teshuvot*, pt. 1 sign 59 (טז) Accessed through the Bar Ilan Database 27 February 2020.

**42** However, compare with Ibn Adret, *She’elot ve Teshuvot*, pt. 1, sign 124 4.5 (אלף רמ ד"ה) “*teshuvah shifḥah*” Accessed through the Bar Ilan Database 29 February 2020. The question of the status of the children of female servants was an issue in Iberia as well as in the Middle East. Assis, *Golden Age*, 265–67; Friedman, *Jewish Polygyny*, 32–34, 291–339. For Christian servants in the home see Baumgarten, *Mothers and Children*, 122–25, 129–44.

this custom according to the rabbis so that the law of *hallah* not be forgotten by Israel. It is a commandment observed in the land (of Israel). And every command they do in the land (of Israel) is not observed anywhere but the land (of Israel). The *hallah* which is separated from the dough, there is nothing but what is decreed; we do not have to separate *hallah* from the dough which she eats for we did not find that the rabbis decreed to take *hallah* from the dough which male and female slaves/servants eat.<sup>43</sup>

As in the text by Ibn Adret, the question and then Rashi's answer suggest that Jews were uncertain about the degree to which their non-Jewish servants should follow Jewish law. Rashi's response implies that many Jews expected their servants to comply with Passover regulations—"during this time people follow this custom"—however, ultimately Rashi rejects the obligation of the servant to separate a piece from the dough for her bread, saying this rule only applies in the land of Israel. In both queries, the impulse seems to have been to integrate servants more fully into the Jewish household by accepting food prepared by their hands and expecting the servants to follow Jewish practice. Indeed, queries about what Christian wet nurses should or should not be encouraged to eat, despite very young Jewish children being allowed to eat non-kosher food, upholds the impression that many Jewish householders urged their non-Jewish servants to follow Jewish dietary law.<sup>44</sup> Jewish leaders were more cautious in their replies, however, and, at least in these two cases, insisted on the servants' status as outsiders in matters of food.

The acceptance of such regulations or customs on the part of the Christian servant (or slave) was precisely what many of the Christian canonists feared. From the description of Ibn Adret, there is no question of Christians celebrating the Jewish holiday, just observing some basic laws governing daily activities. Yet we know from other *responsa*, that Jews, like their Muslim counterparts in North Africa and the Middle East, did give presents to people outside of their community on particular Jewish holidays, such as Purim. Wet nurses collected gifts for the families for whom they worked, and were given gifts themselves. Some rabbis objected to this custom, whereas others understood it as part of their duty to give to the poor of the nations. How widespread this custom was, is unclear; R. Abraham b. Nathan of Lunel, in his *Sefer ha-Manhig*, written at the beginning of the thirteenth century, indicates that giving gifts to wet nurses was a French custom.<sup>45</sup> Yet Katherine Aron-Beller has shown

43 היתה לו שפחה נכרית שלשה בפסח מצה לצורכה בלא נטילת תרומה ובלא מדידה. ונשאל לר' ואמר חלה בזמן הזה שנוהגין מדרבנן כדי שלא תשתכח תורת חלה מישראל, דמצוה הנוהגת בארץ היא וכל מצוה התלויה בארץ אינה נוהגת אלא בארץ. וחלה הפוסרת בעיסה אינה אלא משום גזירה ואין אנו צריכין להפריש חלה מן העיסה שהיא אוכלת שלא מצינו שגזרו רבנן לישול חלה מן העיסה שהעבדים והשפחות אוכלין; Shlomo b. Yitzḥaq of Troyes *Teshuvot* no. 107. Accessed through the Bar Ilan Database and Relmin, [www.cn-telma.fr//relmin/extrait254504/](http://www.cn-telma.fr//relmin/extrait254504/). Also available through Sefaria [www.sefaria.org/Teshuvot\\_Rashi.107.1?vhe=Teshuvot\\_Rashi\\_vol.\\_I,\\_New\\_York,\\_1943&lang=bi](http://www.sefaria.org/Teshuvot_Rashi.107.1?vhe=Teshuvot_Rashi_vol._I,_New_York,_1943&lang=bi).

44 Baumgarten, *Mothers and Children*, 137–38. Most of the sources she gives are from northern Europe. Cohen, "Pope Innocent III, Christian Wet Nurses and the Jews."

45 Abraham b. Nathan of Lunel, *Sefer ha-Manhig*, *hilkhot megillah*, 248–49. R. Samson b. Ṣadok argues that giving gifts to wet nurses is part of Jews' obligation to the poor of the nations. See:

that by the seventeenth century, the expectation that Jews would give gifts to poor Christians on Purim was so ingrained that two constables along with other Christians went to Jewish homes in Modena collecting Purim money in 1625. Problems arose when an elderly Jewish banker, Moisè de Modena declined to give them any money. The constables then accused him before the inquisition saying he had attempted to convert them with the words: “Become Jews and I will give you good Purim.” Moisè himself explained that he had declined to give the Christians money for Purim, reserving charity for that holiday for poor Jews and preferring to give Christians the “customary money gift once a year at Christmas” and had told the constables “You’re not Jews and this is not your festival, so I am not giving you anything.”<sup>46</sup> Clearly, the custom had spread beyond France. More to the point, Christian anxieties about this custom being a path to conversion had not dissipated over time. Some Jews also continued to find it inappropriate to give gifts to Christians during the Jewish holiday, though one of the many ironies of this case, is that while declining to include Christians within the Jewish holiday of Purim, Moisè de Modena had adopted the Christian custom of giving gifts at Christmas and thus “joined” a Christian festival instead. What should be clear from this example is that despite resistance from both Jews and Christians, the holidays, particularly as they related to gift-giving and sociability between Jews and Christians on a personal level, were becoming increasingly intertwined. As Elisheva Carlebach has demonstrated, Jews from the early modern period, at least, kept careful record of Christian holidays, though generally for practical reasons, *not* to celebrate them.<sup>47</sup> Christians likewise kept track of Jewish festivals when it suited them or they were a cause of anxiety.

From the Christian perspective, receiving and giving such gifts especially as part of a Jewish religious celebration, would have fuelled the impression that Christians were being drawn into Jewish holidays. Christian leaders considered this expectation by Jews and their Christian servants’ compliance with it was tantamount to Christians adopting Jewish rituals. While doing so was sometimes seen as a gateway to conversion, as in the papal letters regarding practices in Hungary, having Christians adopt these rituals was regarded as horrific in its own right. For example, in 1267 Dominicans and Franciscans are encouraged to seek out Jews who have led Christians of either gender into “their execrable rite” (*eorum ritum execrabilem*) and punish them.<sup>48</sup> Also in 1267, Pope Clement IV used similar language in his bull to the bishops and archbishops of Provence, Toulouse, and Poitiers, complaining that he had heard that “they (the Jews) labour to attract simple Christians of both sexes to their damnable rite”<sup>49</sup> In the missive, Clement attributes the Jews’ success and confidence to their ability to mix easily with Chris-

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Samson b. Zadok, *Sefer Tashbats*, no. 172. Rashi opposed the custom, or at least his teacher did. See Shlomo b. Yitzḥaq of Troyes, *Teshuvot* no. 131 accessed through Bar Ilan Database; Baumgarten, *Mothers and Children*, 131.

**46** Aron-Beller, “*Buon Purim*.” Citation on 162.

**47** Carlebach, *Palaces of Time*.

**48** Grayzel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 2:102–3.

**49** ‘Christianos utriusque sexus simplices ad suum ritum dampnabilem retrahere moliantur’;

tians, having eschewed regulations against any special dress or prohibitions against free socializing. He goes on to cite the usual prohibitions to be enforced, although he begins with the ban against having a Christian serving woman to care for Jewish children and also forbids Christians nurturing Jewish children in their own homes.<sup>50</sup> While Clement complains about Jews attracting Christians of both sexes, the repeated reference here and in other bulls to female Christian servants engaged in childcare being drawn into joining Jewish rituals combined with Jewish sources describing such women joining in *Purim* celebrations indicates that this particular holiday attracted interreligious participation. This pattern parallels evidence in many of the Muslim sources discussed in the previous section, suggesting that holidays involving gift-giving and children seem to have been a particularly powerful enticement for people to overlook boundaries of religious affiliation. In Western Europe this tendency takes a sinister turn, as Christians come to imagine that Christian children's involvement with Jewish rituals would lead to their death.<sup>51</sup>

### Condemning Conviviality, and Fearing the Lure of Others' Festivals

There are also indications that the Jewish (or Muslim) rituals into which authorities feared Christians were being seduced were far more extensive than mere household regulations of everyday life or the exchange of occasional presents. In a papal letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1286, the Franciscan John Peckham, one finds the following complaint:

One should not forget the crime of those Jews that invites the orthodox to worship with them on the day of the Sabbath or other solemnities or instantly leads them into the Synagogue so that they (Christians) should listen to their (Jews') offices (liturgy), so that according to the custom of his ritual, they show reverence to a scroll rolled in parchment, rather, the book, in which their written law is stated, reverently exhibited, so that many Christians Judaize no less than the Jews themselves.<sup>52</sup>

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Grayzel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 2:108. See discussion in Tartakoff, *Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder*, 32–33.

**50** Grayzel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 2:106–7, 108. On Jews having children nursed in Christian homes, as well as having Christian wet-nurses and servants, see Baumgarten, *Mothers and Children*, 139–43; Cohen, “Pope Innocent III, Christian Wet Nurses and the Jews.”

**51** Tartakoff, *Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder*; Rubin, *Gentile Tales*.

**52** Non omittit Judaeorum ipsorum nequitiā, quin fidei orthodoxae cultores quolibet die Sabbati, ac aliis solomnitatibus eorumdem invitet, ac instantanter inducat, ut in Synagogis suis ipsorum officium audient, illudque juxta sui ritus consuetudinem solemnizent rotulo involuto membranis, seu libro, in quibus lex eorum conscripta consistit, reverentiam exhibentes: quamobrem plerique Christicolae cum Judaeis pariter judaizant. Grayzel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 2:159 and 158 for a slightly different translation. Compare with Grayzel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 2: 179–80.

What is striking about this passage, is that whereas other, earlier Christian texts protesting such behaviour place the initiative and blame on Christians for going to the synagogue, this text seems to imply that Jews themselves *invited* Christians to the synagogue service and other holy days, and thus were desirous of having them there.<sup>53</sup> Presenting the Jews as the ones who invite the Christians follows the rhetorical strategy which Tartakoff noted in relation to Christian fears of Jews luring Christians to convert to Judaism. This passage may thus represent an effort on the part of the Christian author to further condemn the Jews as ones who lead Christians astray, rather than a real record of Jews actively seeking the participation of Christians in their holy days. What becomes especially apparent in this passage in combination with repeated prohibitions against Christians staying and serving in Jewish (and Muslim) homes and participating in non-Christian rituals there, is that what Christian officials imagined and feared was the two-sided desire for and by Christians to join the celebrations and rites of Jews and Muslims. Indeed, in this letter, not only does the author protest that Jews made their Christian servants work on Sundays, but he fears the consequences of daily familiarity and conviviality:

Nevertheless, other Christians and Jews in turn knowingly come together in their own homes in order to idly eat and drink together, (thus) the groundwork for error is prepared.<sup>54</sup>

The anxiety in this letter regarding Jewish efforts to entice Christians to join their rituals or engage in unnecessary and friendly socializing needs to be placed in the context of the turmoil caused by the accusation that a Jew, Seniore b. Josce, had circumcised Edward, son of the physician Benedict, in Norwich. The charge eventually led to the execution of a number of leading Jews, the flight of several others, and the elaboration of this case into a ritual murder accusation.<sup>55</sup> Four years after the composition of this letter, Jews were expelled from England entirely.

While the reaction to this particular case was extreme and long-lasting, the picture of casual commensality was hardly unique to England. Ana Echevarria notes that in Iberia guilds and confraternities had both Muslims and Christians as members, and that Muslims dined at the homes of Christian colleagues. The regulations of such organizations sometimes required that all members, Muslims and Christians alike, attend celebrations, such as weddings, or pay a fine.<sup>56</sup> Requirements by guilds and local officials

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**53** Occasionally during the early Middle Ages, Christians feared that Jews actively enticed Christians to participate in Jewish religious services. See Gerhardus Mongontiacensis, *Der Brief*, 112–14, also in Linder, *Jews in the Legal Sources*, 622–25 and Relmin, Notice no. 137014, projet RELMIN, “Le statut légal des minorités religieuses dans l’espace euro-méditerranéen (V<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècle),” Edition électronique Telma, IRHT, Institut de Recherche et d’Histoire des Textes – Orléans, [www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait137014/](http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait137014/).

**54** Alii nihilominus Christiani et Judaei vicissim in domibus propriis saepe convenient; et dum simul commessionibus, et potationibus vacant, erroris material praeparatur; Grazyel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 2:159 and 158 for a slightly different translation.

**55** Tartakoff, *Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder*, 1–10, 49–67.

**56** Echevarria, “Food as Custom.” See especially 97 and nn27–28.

that Jews or Muslims contribute to Christian festivities, ran directly counter to other prohibitions, usually enacted by representatives of the church, which sought to curtail such interactions.<sup>57</sup> Local and papal canons regularly prohibited Jews and Muslims from attending the funerals, weddings, and baptisms of Christians, whether as guests or as professional mourners or entertainers, and they forbade Christians from attending equivalent ceremonies, such as circumcisions, etc.<sup>58</sup> A fifteenth-century version of such a law from Valladolid listed a variety of jobs that Christians could not do for Muslims or Jews and vice versa, then went on to stipulate that Muslims and Jews:

neither come nor go to the weddings, neither to funerals nor to the tombs of Christians, they should not be godmothers or godfathers (literally “co-mothers” *conmadres* or “co-fathers” *conpadres*) of the Christians nor should Christian men or Christian women of them, neither going to their weddings nor tombs.<sup>59</sup>

The impression that this passage gives is that Muslims, Jews, and Christians did not merely hire one another to perform in private and public events, women and men of each community also developed close, deep ties of friendship and family, provoking sufficient grief that they visited one another’s graves beyond the confines of the funeral and took responsibility for one another’s children. It is possible that the prohibition against visiting the sepulchres of members of other communities is a reference to a kind of localized *ziyāra*, and that these were members of the “special dead” to whom the living could turn for intercession.<sup>60</sup> Given the very familial, personal level of activities which are forbidden, however, it seems more likely that the passage refers to visiting the graves of friends and family.<sup>61</sup> In either case, these were exchanges authorities sought to discourage. Disobedience risked a fine.

These laws were part of an increasing body of regulations against socializing between Christians, Jews, and Muslims, and prosecution of Christians who violated such dictates. For example, according to a short register of inquisitorial denunciations from fourteenth-century Aragon, a group of Christians, including guards and minor officials

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**57** On the requirement for Jews or Muslims to participate in Christian festivities see Chapter 3.

**58** Archives de Perpignan, livre 1er des “Ordinaciones” de la cour du bailli de Perpignan fol. 7v, cited in Régné, *History of the Jews in Aragon*, no. 2592; 1481 Synod of Avila, in García y García, “Jews and Muslims in the Canon Law of the Iberian Peninsula,” Tit. VII, Cap. 2, p. 46; Baer, *Die Juden in Christlichen Spanien*, 2:141, 166, 263–70; Baer, *History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 1:313; Catlos, *Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom*, 438, 472–74, 482; Montenegro, “Actividades socio-profesionales de la mujer judía”; Balbás, *Algunos aspectos*, 71, 78–79.

**59** “nin vengan nin vayan a honras ni a bodas ni a sepolturas de christianos, nin sean comadres nin conpadres de los christianos nin los christianos e christianas dellos, nin vayan a sus bodas nin sepolturas”; Baer, *Die Juden in Christlichen Spanien*, 2:266, para. 4.

**60** On the practice of local *ziyāra* in Iberia, see Jaspert, “Religious Movements in Mudéjar Communities.”

**61** Which is not to say that the two activities were mutually exclusive. Jews at least, visited and prayed at the gravesites of family members, seemingly also hoping for their intercession. Cuffel, “Gendered Visions”; Cuffel, “Between Reverence and Fear”; Horowitz, “Speaking to the Dead”; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 5:183–84.

in Gerona were reprimanded for celebrating, playing, drinking, and eating with Jews in the Jewish quarter during a Christian holy day. Upon further investigation, the bailiff was found to have sold the license to engage in these activities in the Jewish quarter on that day, which resulted in Christians “playing” (*luserant*) with the Jews.<sup>62</sup> Here the tension between local custom and efforts to curtail shared festivities by royal or higher ecclesiastical authorities is quite clear. Additional costs imposed for such behaviour was not always an effective deterrent.

Particularly intriguing for the question of shared religious practices are chapters four and six of title VII of a synod of Avila which took place in 1481. These laws were recopied for the synod of 1556, suggesting their enduring relevance.<sup>63</sup> Chapter four addresses whether Jews and Muslims are allowed to be in churches, in particular, during mass. In general, the text prohibits Muslims and Jews from entering churches, but if extenuating circumstances provide good reason for their presence, they should still be made to leave during the Eucharist ceremony. Attending church in order to hear a sermon, or for catechism, on the other hand, was allowed.<sup>64</sup> Already in 1222, a similar but less elaborate prohibition against Jews entering churches was issued in Oxford.<sup>65</sup> Presumably such proscriptions were enacted in reaction to the seemingly common practice of having Jews and Muslims perform as part in religious celebrations.<sup>66</sup> In the synod of Avila, the fact that clerics and sacristans were particularly charged with carrying out these stipulations as well as ceasing rites funerary rites if Muslims or Jews were present weeping and lamenting, suggests that local church officials were in the habit of allowing Jews and Muslims to enter churches and to participate in Christian funerals, all customs that the higher clergy were eager to end.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, contestations over whether non-Christians should be allowed to share religious spaces or saints, or even enter sanctuaries which the Christians deemed “theirs,” are also occasionally reflected in hagiographical literature, albeit in a more dramatic fashion than in legal decrees. In Lucas de Tuy’s *Miracula Sancti Isidori*, as we have seen, miracles involving Jews or Muslims frequently delineate boundaries between Christian and non-Christian in starkly triumphalist terms. One of these recounts the impulse of some Muslims and Christians to share holy sites and people. Already the anxiety which underlay the composition of the *Miracula* is expressed early in the book, in chapter one:

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**62** Omant, “Mémorial de l’inquisition d’Aragon,” esp. p. 265, fols. 12–13v; Nirenberg, “Les juifs, la violence et le sacré,” esp. 112–13. Compare with ACA: C 13: 276v/Reg. 13. fol. 276v from James I cited in in Régné, *History of the Jews in Aragon*, no. 339; 1481 Synod of Avila, in García y García, “Jews and Muslims in the Canon Law of the Iberian Peninsula,” Tit. VII, Cap. 1, Cap. 3, Cap. 5, pp. 45, 46, 47–48.

**63** García y García, “Jews and Muslims in the Canon Law of the Iberian Peninsula.”

**64** García y García, “Jews and Muslims in the Canon Law of the Iberian Peninsula,” 47.

**65** Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth century*, 1:314/315.

**66** On this topic and relevant bibliography, see Chapter 4 of this book.

But of the outrages by the enormous cooling of the faith of Christians and the abominable growing sect of the Saracens, the state of Spain is deprived of Christians as it is led by means of (literally: “by the hands of”) the sacrileges of the infidel.<sup>67</sup>

Strikingly, what is depriving Spain of Christians is not depredations due to war with the Muslims, but rather the weak faith of Christians and the growing strength of the Muslim one, which, the text implies, leads to conversions to Islam, or, at least toward the “sacrileges” of the Muslims. This apprehension about the allure of Islamic practices and potential Christian conversion very much parallels the anxieties expressed in the legal texts discussed above.<sup>68</sup> Connected to this issue was Christian apprehension about the competition with Christian religious noise which the *adhān*, i.e. the Muslim call to prayer, might pose, objections to the doctrinal content of the *adhān*, its connection to Muslim pilgrimage to local holy individuals, and finally its potential to draw Christians (including former Muslims) to convert.<sup>69</sup> The most famous expression of this unease is in the Council of Vienne in 1311–1312, which, among other decrees, prohibited the *adhān*, yet, as Olivia Remie Constable and others have demonstrated, this was not the first attempt ruling in this direction, nor did it definitively halt the sounding of the *adhān*.<sup>70</sup> In chapter 20 of the *Miracula Sancti Isidori* these various concerns are reflected in dramatic detail as Christians and Muslims compete spatially and aurally for access and eventually domination of a holy gravesite. The conflict begins when the king hears “that they approached the holy tomb together, Ishmaelite with Christian, about to petition blessings from Christ.”<sup>71</sup> When the king prohibits Muslims access to the site on pain of death, tensions escalate. Muslims eventually build their own tower and one of their clerics, Almodonus:

ascended the tower; in order that he proclaim a certain devil, with unfortunate expressions, as is their custom of the sect. Who, by beginning to bring forth sacrilegious words, he fell from the top of the roof and perished, every member smashed to pieces.<sup>72</sup>

The narrative continues, accrediting Isidore for vindicating the Christians, and emphasizing that the unfortunate Almodonus, “most perfect in the law of Muhammad” (*in lege*

**67** “Sed facinorum enormitate tepescente fide christianorum, et sarrecenorum nafaria secta crescente, civitas Hispanalensis a christianis orbata et, ut manibus sacrilegis infidelium est ducta”; Lucas de Tuy, *Liber de Miraculis Sancti Isidori*, chap. 50, fol. 1b.

**68** Also see Tartakoff, *Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder*, 18–58.

**69** Constable, “Regulating Religious Noise.”

**70** Szpiech, “Saracens and Church Councils”; Dohm-van Rossum, “Campanile und Minarett”; Constable, “Regulating Religious Noise”; Jaspert, “Zeichen und Symbole”; Tolan, “Affreux vacarme.”

**71** “quod Hismaelito cum christianis ad sanctum simul accederent tumulum, beneficia peturi a Christo”; Lucas de Tuy, *Liber de Miraculis Sancti Isidori*, chap. 20, fol. 46.

**72** “ascendit turrim, ut ex more eorum sectae diabolicum quodam infaustis vocibus acclamaret. Qui incohando verba sacrilege promere, de summo fastigio corruit, et membris, ferè omnibus frustatim comminutis interiit”; Lucas de Tuy, *Liber de Miraculis Sancti Isidori*, chap. 20, fol. 47.

*Macometi perfectissimis*) died for his blasphemy, having “quickly ascended and begun to crow a miserable song with a tremulous voice.”<sup>73</sup>

In contrast to many other tales in travel narratives or hagiographies of real or imagined Muslim or Jewish veneration of a Christian saint or holy place, in this instance, Muslim reverence brings no honour to St. Isidore. Rather, when Christians and Muslims visit a holy grave together, the king bans the Muslims, much as Muslims are proscribed from entering churches in the legal texts discussed above. When that prohibition is challenged, only the utter destruction of the Muslim antagonist suffices, in contrast to mere punishment by the saint, as was common in travel narratives.<sup>74</sup> Lucas de Tuy emphasizes that Almodonus should be understood as Isidore’s (living) Muslim equivalent when he says that Almodonus is most perfect in Muslim law; the unspoken but obvious parallel to Almodonus is Isidore, one of the first “doctors” of Christian thought from Iberia. Almodonus’ perfection in his own religion heightens the miraculous power which may be attributed to Isidore by defeating him. In this text, the description of Muslim religious noise as ugly—“crow(ing) a miserable song with a tremulous voice”—and blasphemous, follows what a number of scholars have observed regarding Christian descriptions of the Muslim call to prayer, namely that by portraying it as cacophonous or aurally repellent in other ways, Christians marked Muslim religious sound as evil and undesirable.<sup>75</sup> In the context of thirteenth-century Iberia and later, where competition between Muslim and Christian religious noise was being constantly renegotiated, a tale in which a Christian saint brutally cuts off the sound of Muslim prayer would have been appealing to those who sought to silence Muslim religious noise. That the tale is told as part of a narrative about shared veneration is also significant, for as a number of scholars have pointed out, Christian condemnations of the *adhān* and other forms of Muslim celebrations were frequently tied to attempts by Christian authorities to limit the practice *ziyāra* to the graves of local holy figures.<sup>76</sup> In this light, chapter twenty of *Miracula Sancti Isidori* is designed to countermand Christian acceptance of Muslims in churches or other holy spaces, or tolerance of Muslim religious sound or pilgrimage destinations that might be shared, wittingly or otherwise by Christians. Instead, Isidore is set up as the uncompromising, true saint, and the correct focus for pilgrimage.

Related to such practices, chapter six of the laws enacted by the synod of Avila, entitled, “That in those town councils or processions held in honour of God, neither Jews nor Muslims should participate nor those so called,” as the title suggests, attempts to restrict Jewish and Muslim involvement in Christian processions.<sup>77</sup> This particular text speci-

**73** “festinus ascendit, et misera carmina voce tremula canere coepit”; Lucas de Tuy, *Liber de Miraculis Sancti Isidori*, chap. 20, 48. The entire chapter runs 45–49.

**74** See, for example, Bertrandon de la Broquière, *Le Voyage d’Outremer*, 40 and discussion in Chapter 2.

**75** Cuffel, “Seductive Sounds”; Tolan, “Affreux vacarme.”

**76** Jaspert, “Religious Movements in Mudéjar Communities”; Constable, “Regulating Noise.”

**77** “Que en los ayuntamientos o processions que se fizieren a honor de Dios, non intervengan ni estan los judios y los moros, ni para ello sean llamados”; García y García, “Jews and Muslims in the Canon Law of the Iberian Peninsula,” 48.

fies that Jews and Muslims were *compelled* to join such festivities, a custom the author protests vigorously:

An abuse we have seen done in this city of Avila, at which we have seen in no other place of the Christians; that Jews and Muslims are compelled to walk in procession and to make dances and other (expressions of) joy on the day of Corpus Christi and other general processions of the religion and Christian celebration, which, for some well-known benefits of God are made to belong to the Christian faithful, giving the thanks to God that they can for the benefit that he has given to them. And we do not know for what reason or what blindness by such holy and faithful councils have to agree and require infidels to participate, to make a monstrous body, unifying two species of infidelity, a head of a faith like ours, so holy and true, where, in place of God's honour, one follows shame, because as the Wise one said, "praise in the mouth of a sinner does not seem good" in place of which they blaspheme among themselves the holy name of Jesus Christ which is invoked over us...we establish and command in this our bishopric, in the processions and councils of the clergy and the people that are made in honour of God, the aforementioned Jewish and Muslim infidels who proceed from here, do not go and cannot participate nor may they be compelled to do so on pain of further excommunication which, for this same fact, judges, both ecclesiastical and secular incur, who call, cause to call or give it authority or favour, or counsel or aid or any other person; and we request beyond this punishment you fine each one of those ecclesiastical judges a penalty of six *doblas*...Nor for that do we seek that they (Muslims and Jews) be excused from processions and councils that are made to receive kings, princes and other secular acts.<sup>78</sup>

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**78** "Una abusion havemos visto fazer en esta ciudad de Avila, la qual en ningun lugar de christianos vimos: que los judios y moros son compelidos a andar en procession y fazer danças y otras alegrías el día del Cuerpo de nuestro Señor y otras processiones generales de la religiosa y Christiana alegría que, por algunos beneficios rescebidos de Dios, pertenesce fazer a los fieles christianos, dando las gracias que pueden a Dios por el beneficio que les ha hecho. Y non sabemos por que razon o con que ceguedad, a tan santos y fieles ayuntamientos hayan de concurrir y ser necessitados a intervenir los infieles, a fazer un cuerpo monstruoso, ayuntadas dos especies de infidelidad a tan santa y verdadera cabeça de fe como la nuestra, donde, en lugar de honor de Dios, se sigue vituperio, porque, como dize el Sabio, 'no parece bien la alabança en boca del pecador', en lugar de la qual, ellos blasfeman entre si el sancto nombre de Jesuchristo que es invocado sobre nosotros... statuimos y mandamos que en este nuestro obispado, en las processiones y ayuntamientos del clero y del pueblo que por honra de Dios se fazen, los dichos judios y moros infieles de aqui adelante no vayan ni puedan intervenir, ni puedan ser a ello compelidos, so pena de excomunion mayor, la qual incurran por ese mismo fecho los juezes, asi ecclesiasticos como seglares, que los llamaren o fizieren llamar o diereoridad o favor o consejo o ayuda, o qualquier otra persona; y queremos, allende desta pena, caiga cada uno de los juezes ecclesiasticos en pena de seys doblas, ... Ni por eso queremos sean excusados de las processiones y ayuntamientos que se fazen a recebimientos de reyes y princepes y otros actos seglares"; García y García, "Jews and Muslims in the Canon Law of the Iberian Peninsula," 48.

Avila was not exceptional in engaging in such behaviour, as we have seen.<sup>79</sup> In this particular passage, however, the tension between local authorities, both clerical and secular, and higher ecclesiastical officials is clear. The church sought to differentiate between secular and religious celebrations; in the former, Muslims and Jews could participate, in the latter, not. Yet, as demonstrated in Chapter 3, according to local custom in Iberia, the games, music, and dance of Muslims and Jews became such an ingrained element of certain kinds of ceremonies, in particular processions, that Christians could not conceive of festivities without them, even to the point of requiring Jews and Muslims to perform in them—a practice clearly described in this passage. When Muslims and Jews were no longer present and available in Iberia, Christian dressing up as such and took on their former roles. Indeed, while the phrase to “those so called (Muslims or Jews)” in the title of chapter six probably refers to new Christians, i.e. Jewish or Muslim converts to Christianity or their descendants, it is possible that this is an oblique reference to the custom of Christians disguising themselves as Muslims or Jews in order to take on their usual roles. The episcopal author of the text cited above desperately sought to curb such behaviour through penalties, especially against clerical perpetrators. Although I have shown that royal entries often contained religious elements, this author distinguished between those, which he considered secular and therefore open to non-Christians, and religious processions, in which, he argued, the participation of Jews and Muslims was utterly inappropriate. Part of the reason he condemned Jewish and Muslim participation, was that, according to him, they blasphemed Jesus. Thus, their presence brought shame rather than honour to God and the Christian holy day.

These same tensions and mores were likewise addressed in more playful terms in satirical literature from Iberia. In *The Book of Good Love* (*El Libro de Buen Amor*), by the Castilian poet Juan Ruiz (ca. 1283–1350 CE), after a series of stanzas outlining the death of Jesus and the Jews’ villainous role in killing him, the narrative turns to the contest between “Lady Lent” (*Doña Cuaresma*) and “Sir Carnal” (*Don Carnal*), presented as the opponent of Lent and unrepentantly devoted to the pleasures of food. Sir Carnal flees the church where Holy Week services are being conducted and goes to the Jewish quarter (*la jodería*) when Passover was about to begin—signified, appropriately enough, by a kind of food—the unleavened bread of Passover—and is welcomed there. He sees that it is a “good day” (*buen día*) i.e. a holiday, and his escape is further assisted by the Jews.<sup>80</sup> As Michelle Hamilton has pointed out, a further difference between Sir Carnal and Lady Lent, is that Carnal embraces Jews and Muslims’ participation in the festivities and calls to them specifically for aid and offers them beef, whereas Lady Lent begins the Christian holy season by blessing priests and clerics—provided that they are not fornicators.<sup>81</sup> Then, during Easter, Sir Love, a friend of Sir Carnal, is greeted with a procession, com-

<sup>79</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>80</sup> Juan Ruiz *El Libro de Buen Amor*, stanzas 1050–1055, 1063–1065, 1181–1184. For the strife between Lent and carnality, see stanzas 1067–1209. Hamilton, “Carnal, Carnival and Purim.”

<sup>81</sup> Juan Ruiz *El Libro de Buen Amor*, stanzas 1193, 1069. Hamilton, “Carnal, Carnival and Purim.”

plete with flowers, fancy birds, multiple colours, townspeople, various types of churchmen and nuns, tents, dancing, *and* Muslim and Jewish musicians and music.<sup>82</sup>

In this text, like the synod of Avila, the Christian religious holiday is in competition with more worldly or “secular” expectations of festive events, represented by Sir Carnal, which Hamilton translates as “Sir Carnival.” Jews and Muslims, with their foods and music, are very much part of and welcomed into this worldly approach to festivities, as they were in actual processions and celebrations in Iberia. By contrast, the stricter, more ideal religious view, represented by Lent, allowed only (good) Christians. Clergy of various types, as indicated in legal texts relating to such events, were on both sides. Indeed, the caveat that Lady Lent blesses only those clerics and priests not engaging in fornication is, perhaps, intended as an insinuation that the number of Christian religious leaders who adhered strictly to the churches’ regulations was quite sparse. Thus, as in the legal texts, this satirical poem presents a church divided based on who should participate in religious as well as other types of processions, and how festivals should be celebrated, while at the same time, providing evidence of how common such interreligious “sharing” was. More insidious, is the depiction of Sir Carnal leaving the church during Holy Week in favour of Jewish space, food, and religious celebration. Here again, the fear that Christians would be lured into the observance or co-celebration of non-Christian, in this case Jewish, holy days is presented this time in poetic form. The poet signals that these are sinful behaviours which dishonour the Christian holiday, first by reminding the readers of the Jews’ actions against Jesus in the stanzas before the contest between Lady Lent, Sirs Carnal and Love, and secondly, by linking such behaviours explicitly with carnality, in the form of gluttony and other sensual pleasures, and the Jews, who were likewise linked with carnality in the Christian tradition.<sup>83</sup>

### Fear of Real and Imagined Violence of Tongue and Deed

The fear of blasphemy, of dishonourable or even violent deeds and tales by Jews and Muslims, which related to Christian holy spaces, days, or people, was frequently evoked in canon law texts. Included in these were expressions of fear that Jews would not only engage in insulting behaviour toward Christianity, but that they would force Christians working for them into actively insulting Christianity.<sup>84</sup> Christian fears that Jews in particular would engage in ritual behaviour insulting to Christianity, either during their own festivals, such as Purim, or during Christian ones which the Jews especially scorned, such

<sup>82</sup> Juan Ruiz *El Libro de Buen Amor*, stanzas 1225–1312. For the characteristics of processions in Iberia, see Chapter 3 and Cuffel, “Seductive Sounds”; Ruiz, *A King Travels*; Ruiz, “Elite and Popular Culture”;

<sup>83</sup> Abulafia, “Bodies in the Jewish–Christian debate.”

<sup>84</sup> Grayzel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 1:114–17, 182/183, 198/199, 250/251–252/253, 308/309, 316/317–318/319, 341–43, 2:106–10; Baer, *Die Juden in Christlichen Spanien*, 2:40, 45, 227, 331; Omont, “Mémorial de l’inquisition d’Aragon,” esp. p. 265, fols. 12–13v; Tolan, “Blasphemy and Protection of the Faith”; Tolan, “Of Blood and Milk”; Cohen, “Pope Innocent III, Christian Wet Nurses and the Jews.”

as Easter was an old one, already addressed in the Theodosian code.<sup>85</sup> The Theodosian code also stipulates that Jews' synagogues and their right to celebrate the Sabbath according to their own customs were protected.<sup>86</sup> This protection is elaborated upon and repeated in Christian legislation, specifying that none should disturb them or throw stones at the Jews during their festivals, or desecrate their cemeteries.<sup>87</sup> Legislation requiring Jews and Muslims to stay inside their homes, close their windows and doors and not travel about on the streets served a two-tiered function; to protect non-Christians from Christian festive violence on the one hand, and to prevent Jews and Muslims from participating in or disturbing Christian holidays on the other.<sup>88</sup> The dual function of such regulations is expressed mildly and clearly in a text from the spring of 1227 of the council of Narbonne, wherein Jews are ordered not to leave their homes during Holy Week unless necessary, "lest they scandalize the Christians or be scandalized by them."<sup>89</sup>

In the thirteenth century, however, a new element enters these expressions of concern, namely references to the Talmud or to blaspheming Mary or Jesus in particular.<sup>90</sup>

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**85** Theodosian Code 16.8.18; Notice no. 979, projet RELMIN, "Le statut légal des minorités religieuses dans l'espace euro-méditerranéen (V<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)," Edition électronique Telma, IRHT, Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes – Orléans, [www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait979/](http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait979/); Tolan, "The Rites of Purim."

**86** Theodosian Code, 16.8.20; Notice no. 244151, projet RELMIN, "Le statut légal des minorités religieuses dans l'espace euro-méditerranéen (V<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)," Edition électronique Telma, IRHT, Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes – Orléans, [www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait244151/](http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait244151/).

**87** "Sicut Iudeis" of Pope Clement III, Notice no. 87468, projet RELMIN, "Le statut légal des minorités religieuses dans l'espace euro-méditerranéen (V<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)," Edition électronique Telma, IRHT, Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes – Orléans, [www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait87468/](http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait87468/); Sicut Judaeis of Pope Alexander III, Notice no. 103877, projet RELMIN, "Le statut légal des minorités religieuses dans l'espace euro-méditerranéen (V<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)," Edition électronique Telma, IRHT, Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes – Orléans, [www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait103877/](http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait103877/); Raymond of Peñafort Notice no. 136266, projet RELMIN, "Le statut légal des minorités religieuses dans l'espace euro-méditerranéen (V<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)," Edition électronique Telma, IRHT, Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes – Orléans, [www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait136266/](http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait136266/); Grayzel *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 1:92/93–94/95, 2:56, 70–71, 140, 148–49; Grayzel, "The Papal Bull *Sicut Judaeis*."

**88** Grayzel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 1:308/309, 316/317, 332/333, 2:107; *Alfonso X and the Jews*, pp. 30–31, also in Notice no. 238333, projet RELMIN, "Le statut légal des minorités religieuses dans l'espace euro-méditerranéen (V<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)," Edition électronique Telma, IRHT, Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes – Orléans, [www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait238333/](http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait238333/); *Liber provixionum et reformaxionum comunis Placentie*, busta 2, registro 11, 24r, Notice no. 254508, projet RELMIN, "Le statut légal des minorités religieuses dans l'espace euro-méditerranéen (V<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)," Edition électronique Telma, IRHT, Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes – Orléans, [www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait254508/](http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait254508/).

**89** "Et ne Christianos scandalizent, vel scandalizentur ab iis"; Grayzel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 1:316/317.

**90** Grayzel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 1:106/107–108/109, 250/251, 2:107, 157–59; Baer, *Die Juden in Christlichen Spanien*, 2: 40, para. 3, 2:227 para. 1; *Alfonso X and the Jews*, 30–31, also in Notice no. 238333, projet RELMIN, "Le statut légal des minorités religieuses dans l'espace euro-méditerranéen (V<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)," Edition électronique Telma, IRHT, Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes – Orléans, [www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait238333/](http://www.cn-telma.fr/relmin/extrait238333/).

In 1205 Pope Innocent III wrote to King Philip-Augustus of France (1165–1223 CE, r. 1180–1223) protesting that Jews were: “blaspheming against the name of the Lord, they publicly insult Christians by saying that they (the Christians) believe in a peasant who had been hanged by the Jewish people.”<sup>91</sup> The letter goes on to complain how the Jews “contrary to old custom” (*contra veterem consuetudinem*) run about publicly, deriding the Christians for venerating the cross, and trying to dissuade them from it.<sup>92</sup> Of particular significance here and in other texts by Innocent III, however, is the fear of Jewish mockery and abuse of Christianity and Christian ritual. His reference to the Jews going against “old custom” suggests that he saw Jews’ behaviour as a new development, which was especially disturbing to him.<sup>93</sup> In contrast to the missive of Pope Innocent IV (ca. 1195–1254 CE) to the ruler of France in 1244, which was written in the aftermath of the Paris Talmud trial of 1240, here there is no direct reference to the Talmud nor details which allow an unequivocal connection between the reputed polemic which Innocent attributes to the Jews here and the Jewish anti-Gospel, the *Toledot Yeshu*. Nevertheless, the biographical details given of Jesus here echo the tone of those in the Babylonian Talmud and versions of the *Toledot Yeshu*, suggesting that Christians were aware of and disturbed by such Jewish counter-narratives in the very early thirteenth century, at least.<sup>94</sup> Concerns about insulting renditions of Jesus and Mary’s life-stories were one element in a larger Christian discourse about Jewish mockery, verbal and even physical violence against adult Christians, their children, or their sacred objects, especially during Holy Week. Jews’ enactment of ritual murder and desecration of Christian holy objects are presented in both legal and hagiographic texts such as Alfonso the X’s *Siete Partidas*, or the *Miracles of Our Lady*, by Gonzalo de Berceo (ca. 1197–before 1264 CE), as activities which the Jews undertake during Christian holy week, or in other texts, during Passover, which was closely associated with Easter.<sup>95</sup> Thus, Christians imagined that Jews engaged in a variety of synchronic, counter-rituals, which were, in according to some

**91** “nomen Domini blasphemantes, publice Christianis insultant, quod credant in rusticum quemdam suspensum a populo Judeorum”; Grayzel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 1:106/107.

**92** Grayzel, *Church and the Jews in the XIII Century*, 1:108/109.

**93** Tolan, “Of Blood and Milk.”

**94** Meerson and Schäfer, ed. and transl., *Toledot Yeshu: The Life Story of Jesus*; Certainly, versions of the *Toledot Yeshu* were known in Iberia, and had been known in France during the early Middle Ages. Schäfer, “Agobard’s and Amulo’s *Toledot Yeshu*”; Meerson, “Meaningful Nonsense”; Tartakoff, “The *Toledot Yeshu*,” all in *Toledot Yeshu (“The Life Story of Jesus”) Revisited*, ed. Schäfer, Meerson, and Deutsch, 27–48, 181–95, 297–309 respectively; Cuffel, “Between Epic Entertainment and Polemical Exegesis”; Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*; Jordan, “Marian Devotion and the Talmud Trial of 1240”; Biale, “Counter-History.”

**95** *Alfonso X and the Jews*, 30–31, also in Notice no. 238333, projet RELMIN, “Le statut légal des minorités religieuses dans l’espace euro-méditerranéen (V<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècle),” Edition électronique Telma, IRHT, Institut de Recherche et d’Histoire des Textes – Orléans, [www.cn-telma.fr/remlin/extrait238333/](http://www.cn-telma.fr/remlin/extrait238333/); Gonzalo de Berceo, *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*, stanzas 413–430; See n82 above for further sources; Hamilton, “Carnal, Carnival and Purim”; Tartakoff, *Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder*, 47–69; Resnick, *Marks of Distinction*, 194–206; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 171–72; Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 135–204; Rubin, *Gentile Tales*.

Christians, inextricably intertwined with Christians' own celebrations, and harmful to the Christian community and the honour of Jesus and Mary. Indeed, as Alex Novikoff has demonstrated, the language used in Christian drama depicting the activity of devils and Jews and those in the letters of Innocent III closely paralleled one another, again suggesting a blurring of the lines between Christian imaginings and legal, social, and ritual realities.<sup>96</sup> The mockery by Jews of Christian ritual presented in these Christian texts, portray Jews as doing what Christians themselves did to the Jews and, to a lesser extent Muslims, i.e. engage in theatrical ritual violence, ranging from tales, games, to acts of physical aggression, as part of a specific religious holiday designed to humiliate religious outsiders and reiterate their subordinate position within the spiritual hierarchy. Because these elements had become standard in Christians' own celebrations of Holy Week and Easter, Christians assumed they must be present in Jewish celebrations, and likewise, just as Jews were a key element in Christian ritual (even if elements of the Church opposed such behaviour), Christians assumed that they must feature in Jewish rituals.<sup>97</sup> This is not to say that Jews never engaged in any kind of mocking counter-ritual or narrative against Christianity or others they counted among their oppressors; evidence does exist of such behaviour during Purim and of the use of the *Toledot Yeshu* as a tale of entertainment and resistance to Christianity.<sup>98</sup> Yet, in examining such evidence, particularly from the Christian side, the role of the Christians' own suppositions must be taken into account.

In fact, Christians and ritualized violence did become part of Provençal Jewish Passover ritual and from there part of Iberian and Italian Jewish ritual, though not in the way Christians imagined.<sup>99</sup> In general, the Passover ritual features the liberation of the Jewish people from oppression by non-Jewish overlords by remembering and retelling the story of Moses, who, at God's behest, confronted Pharaoh and led the Israelites from Egypt to the promised land.<sup>100</sup> Already this narrative lends itself to an interpretation of Jews' redemption from and punishment of current oppressors, and indeed, in the illuminations and supplementary poems in many medieval *Haggadot* these sentiments are expressed.<sup>101</sup> More specifically pertinent, however, was the development of a liturgical tradition for the "day of confinement/shutting in" (*yom ha-hesger* / יום ההסגר), namely the day(s) in which

**96** Novikoff, "Plateas Publice Discurrentes?"

**97** Cecil Roth also suggested a connection between laws protecting the Jews and Christian beliefs about Jewish violence; "The Eastertide Stoning."

**98** Tolán, "The Rites of Purim"; Tartakoff, *Between Christian and Jew*, 122; Tartakoff, "The *Toledot Yeshu* and the Jewish-Christian Conflict in the Medieval Crown of Aragon," in *Toledot Yeshu* ("The Life Story of Jesus") Revisited, ed. Schäfer, Meerson, and Deutsch, 297–309; Horowitz, *Reckless Rites*.

**99** Einbinder, "Hebrew Poems for the 'Day of Shutting In'"; Roth, "The Eastertide Stoning."

**100** Exodus 6–18.

**101** Loewe, ed. and transl., *The Rylands Haggadah*. For examples of poems with relatively clear polemical content see fols. 45a, 46b, 47a, 49b, 50b, 53b and nos. 46, 53, 55, 67, 70, 81 pp. 52, 54, 55, 60, 61, 66 respectively. For polemical imagery and its possible meaning see Barlow, "The Muslim Warrior at the Seder Meal"; Epstein, *Medieval Haggadah*; Epstein, *Dreams of Subversion*; Shalev-Eyni, "Who are the Heirs to the Hebrew Bible?"; Laderman, "Two Faces of Eve"; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 213–15, 220–23; Harris, "Polemical Images in the *Golden Haggadah*."

Jews were forced to remain indoors and were subject to having their homes stoned and other acts of violence by Christians during Holy Week. One of the earliest poems for this event is entitled *Nishmat hadufim deḥufim / Soul of those driven and pressed in haste*, by the thirteenth-century poet from Provence, Isaac ha-Seniri. This poem, as Susan Einbinder demonstrates, exists in several versions, whose contents, like those of many songs, were treated as mutable, depending on the transmission and need of the community.<sup>102</sup> In the version contained in the Rylands Haggadah, the Jews' sense of fear and being trapped and the specific nature of Christian violence are clearly described:

The soul of those pressed and driven in haste to call in your name, they went out—  
will honour You—to honour your name they were brought to an enclosed space  
and in prisons they were concealed

The soul of the fearful remnants,<sup>103</sup> they were not proud—will extol Your  
Name—

The day they went out to intercede for their lives

From holes<sup>104</sup> (in) which they had hidden themselves there (1 Sam. 14:11)

The soul of those lamenting and fearful are trampled underfoot with crushing  
oppression—will sing Your Name—with their call he arrived at the doors of  
afflicted ones

A time to throw stones (Eccl. 3:5)

The soul of those alone and isolated between a wicked nation and (who) sets a  
snare—will proclaim Your unity—

in his saying my god for my false god you have laid a trap

and I will seek his blood from your hand. (Ez. 3:18, 20, 33:8)

The soul of those crushed and broken (who) endure the blazing wrath—  
will exalt You—

They throw (a stone) at a hair and do not miss (Jud. 20:16)

They have taken their stand at the gate (Is. 22:7)<sup>105</sup>

**102** Einbinder, "Hebrew Poems for the 'Day of Shutting In.'" Einbinder notes a number of other terms for this "holiday" and variations on the title of ha-Seniri's poem.

**103** Einbinder suggests that remnant "*saridim*" (שרידיים) is a hint to Obadiah 13–14.

**104** Note that *horim* (חורים) can also mean "noblemen" or "freemen," in which the verse would suggest that they were interceding with officials for their lives, something which also fits in context.

**105** נשמת הדופים דחופים לקרא בשמך יצאו תהדרך \\ לכבוד שמך במסגר הובאו \\ ובבתי כלאים התבאו  
נשמת שרידים חרדים לא נשאו ראשם תשגבך \\ והיום יצאו לבקש על נפשם \\ מן החורים אשר התחבאו שם  
נשמת נוהים רוהים בפרך מונים תנגן לשמך \\ בקראם הגיע לפתחי מענים \\ עת להשליך אבנים  
נשמת רעוצים רצוצים סובלים חמת צר בערה תרוממך \\ וקולעים לא יחטיאו השערה \\ שות שתו השערה;  
Loewe, ed. and transl. *The Rylands Haggadah*, fols. 50b–51a. A very different translation on p. 61

Here the specific practice of throwing stones during this time is clearly evoked both in the last stanza and in the third one. The idea that Christians engaged in this violence as an act of revenge for what they said Jews did to Jesus, is also alluded to in stanza four when the non-Jews say: “for my false god you have laid a trap / I will seek his blood from your hand.” Likewise, the custom of Jews having to turn to the lord or local authorities for protection appears to be the subject of stanza two.

This poem and others of this genre were integrated into the Passover liturgy, usually for the Sabbath of Passover.<sup>106</sup> Thus, in Mediterranean Europe, Passover and the Easter season did indeed become inextricably bound together; Christians cultivated and acted out their version of Jesus’ death at Jewish hands, and enacted literal, ritualized revenge against the Jews, while increasingly conceiving of Jews engaging in their own version of mockery and violence against the Christian community. As Christians annually performed these stories, whether via ritual stoning and games, or through religious theatrical pieces (or both), they reinforced negative Christian memories and associations regarding the Jews. In addition, they inspired a Jewish ritual dedicated to lamenting and remembering Christian ritualized violence against the Jewish community. The poem(s) for the day of shutting in reinforced Jewish associations between Christians and Jewish oppressors of old, all the more so because of the poem’s recitation during Passover, wherein the wickedness of Pharaoh was recalled, and his eventual, devastating punishment at God’s hands. Thus, here is not a shared ritual in the sense of having a commonly revered place or person. Rather, Christian and Jewish celebrations of their respective holidays constituted entangled counter-rituals, but were shared in the sense that in the forms expressed in the Middle Ages, one would not exist without the other, and each served to delineate one group’s relationship with the other.

In many ways these observations resemble those of Israel Yuval, who has long argued for the liturgical, polemical interplay between Passover and Easter in the context of Jewish-Christian relations, although he has suggested that the liturgical poems (*piyyuṭim*) of Ashkenazim were particularly focused on divine vengeance against the Christians, in contrast to those of the Sephardim.<sup>107</sup> Yet as Einbinder has shown, vengeance, or at least divine punishment is implied by the biblical verses and contexts which Isaac ha-Seniri chose.<sup>108</sup> For example, 1 Samuel 14:11, is evoked in the second stanza with the comment about the Jews coming out from the holes where they were hidden. In its biblical context this passage referred to Jonathan, son of King Saul, and his companion appearing before the Philistines, who initially mistakenly assumed this act to be a sign of Israelite weakness, only to be slaughtered by Jonathan. Placed in its broader context, an apt description of Jews’ abjection in the poem, becomes an implicit threat against the enemies of

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no. 70. This version of the poem is also transcribed by Einbinder, “Hebrew Poems for the ‘Day of Shutting In,’” 133.

**106** Einbinder, “Hebrew Poems for the ‘Day of Shutting In,’” esp. 113.

**107** Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 38–115, 123–34, 205–56. On relative lack of vengeance as a prominent theme in Sefardi poetry, see 110–15.

**108** Einbinder, “Hebrew Poems for the ‘Day of Shutting In.’” She also shows that some later renditions move away from a sharply polemical focus on violence to the resolution of tensions.

the Jews. I would suggest, therefore, that difference between Passover and the Easter season as points of polemic and violent imaginings in Northern Europe vs Mediterranean lands lay largely in the formalization of these expressions, the incorporation of Jews into Christian Holy Week festivities, and the precise mirroring of Christian ritual in Jewish poetic narrative in Southern Europe.

What I have attempted to demonstrate in this section is that while Christian law had long contained references to the need to protect Jews from Christian violence and also to prohibit disrespectful behaviour or proselytism by Jews toward Christianity, with the approach of the thirteenth century and thereafter Christian concerns about these issues both intensified and became more specific. One may suspect, for example, the question of to what extent Christian servants should follow Jewish laws about food preparation, or the custom of giving gifts to non-Jewish servants predated Rashi, writing in the eleventh to very early twelfth century or Abraham b. Nathan in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; nothing in Rashi's response to the query about the status of Passover bread used by a Gentile servant, suggests that the scenario was an unfamiliar one. However, as Christian religious, and to a lesser extent, secular authorities became aware of the details of quotidian Jewish-Christian relations, anxiety increased, even as they misinterpreted or exaggerated what they thought they knew about the degree to which Jews were inclined to incorporate non-Jews into their holiday celebrations. As the incident surrounding Moisé de Modena shows, however, by the late Middle Ages and early modern period certain cross- or interreligious holiday exchanges had become assumed by both Christians and Jews.

As noted in the previous section, Islam and Muslim-Christian relations also came into specific, sharper focus for Christian authorities at this time. Whereas Jewish and Muslim (and some Eastern Christian) law recognized conditions under which attending celebrations or visiting the holy places of, and even willingly donating to members of the religious other and their institutions was allowed, for Western Christian authorities, such exchanges were a source of anxiety and outrage.<sup>109</sup> As I demonstrated in Chapter 3, when Christians in Western Europe did allow donations to or participation in Christian religious events and institutions, they sought to be in control, and at times forced Muslims and Jews into such "donations" and celebrations. Here in this chapter, the divide between clergy and local authorities who supported the participation of Muslims and Jews in Christian religious celebrations, and those who did not, already noted in Chapter 3, is even more pronounced. Christian objections to such *laissez-faire* attitudes on the part of their co-religionists who allowed and even encouraged Muslim-Jewish-Christian socializing and participation in Christian celebrations found voice not only in legal but also hagiographical and satirical literature. Given the number and variety of sources, both positive and negative, describing this kind of behaviour, it seems clear that casual conviviality and participation in certain types of events, sometimes familial, sometimes publicly religious, across confessional boundaries was the norm, especially though not exclusively in Iberia.

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**109** Compare with the discussion in Chapter 4 of legal traditions regarding donations or attending the celebrations of other religious communities in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Much more sinister, however, were Christian beliefs that Jews regularly engaged in mockery of Jesus, Mary, Christian holy objects, and Christianity as a whole and even committed violent acts toward Christians and their children either as an integral part of Jews' own holidays, or in defiance of Christian ones, in particular Holy Week/Easter and later, Corpus Christi. I argued in this chapter, that Western Christian imaginings of Jewish festal anti-Christian violence were a transposition of Christians own annual ritual violence toward the Jews. In essence Christians supposed that Jews were the mirror opposite of themselves, only, if anything, more violent. Christian assumptions of Jewish ill-will was further fed by increasing awareness of the Talmud and other extra-biblical Jewish literature, including the *Toledot Yeshu*, which contained negative portrayals of Jesus, his family, and followers. Indeed, anecdotal evidence hints that Jews may have occasionally indulged in ribald behaviour with anti-Christian content, however, much stronger, are indications of Jewish counter narratives and rituals. In addition to indications that the *Toledot Yeshu* served as a Jewish counter narrative, Southern European Jewish Passover rituals sometimes contained poetry which addressed Jews' relationship with both Christians and Muslims, and very specifically evoked Christians' annual rituals of anti-Jewish violence. Exactly how that violence was recalled shifted from manuscript to manuscript, community to community. Nevertheless, both Christians and Jews cultivated an annual memory of violence, one inflicted upon the other, whether in truth or imagined, so that the other's holiday, while not so much shared, was inextricably intertwined.

### Real and Imagined Shared Practices in Byzantine and Armenian Sources

Byzantines and Armenians frequently used association with Judaism as an epithet against one another, a point which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. Later the same accusation was directed against Latin Christians as part of the polemic against unifying with the Western European Church.<sup>110</sup> Significantly, however, as with the Byzantine hagiographies featuring Jews and other non-Christians, the basic topoi of Byzantine accusations of Armenian Judaizing, such their use of unleavened bread for the Eucharist, was established already in late antiquity, especially during the iconoclastic debate.<sup>111</sup> Thus, early triumphalist hagiographical tales of saints assisting desperate or astonished Jews, Muslims, and other non-Christians, or punishing recalcitrant ones, and legal and polemical texts chiding various Christian populations for heterodox practices and likening them to Jews and, more rarely, Muslims, need to be seen as different aspects of a common polemical impulse. Imagined Judaism and shared rituals were at the core of both.

**110** Ohanjanyan, "Armenian–Jewish Connections"; Déroche, "Regards croisés des hérésiologues"; Pogossian, "Jews in Armenian Apocalyptic Traditions"; Kolbaba, "East Roman Anti-Armenian Polemic"; Kolbaba, "Byzantines, Armenians and Latins"; Kolbaba, *Byzantine Lists*; Smith, *And Taking Bread*, 65–70, 82, 97, 137, 151–55, 169, 176–81.

**111** Kolbaba, "Byzantines, Armenians and Latins."

Byzantine and Armenian legal and polemical discussions about “shared” or “imitated” practices focus on the following issues: foodways, both generally and ritualized foodstuffs, such as the bread or wine of the Eucharist or the consumption of meat from ritually sacrificed animals; joining Jews, Muslims or Christians deemed heretical, in their places of worship, or allowing non-Christians or “bad” Christians to enter Christian buildings; and finally, participating in, adopting or imitating the rituals of Jews or Muslims, or how to deal both with Muslims who claim to have undergone a Christian ritual, specifically baptism, or to have a Christian godparent, and with the clerics who officiated at such rites. Another factor, when considering whether and under what conditions shared religious practices might take place, are descriptions and/or prescriptions which designated outsiders as repulsive and/or impure. Before turning to these specific issues, however, it is necessary to understand where Jewish and Muslim populations could be found in Armenian and Byzantine territories, the impact of continually shifting and contested sovereignty of some of these lands on inter- and intra-religious relations, and, finally, the legal developments in Byzantium and Armenia.

### Locating Muslims, Finding Jews

Recently, Byzantine Jewish communities have become the subject of renewed interest and study, although much still remains to be done.<sup>112</sup> Systematic studies examining even the presence of a Muslim minority in Byzantine territories are sparse, despite clear evidence that some Muslims did live in Byzantine-controlled lands.<sup>113</sup> There was at least one mosque in Constantinople itself since the eighth century, ostensibly for prisoners of war, merchants or visitors. The number seems to have multiplied with time, as did a variety of sites in core Byzantine territories, which were venerated by Muslims or former Muslims whose affiliation with Christianity seems to have been tenuous.<sup>114</sup> A good indicator of the religious and cultural diversity of Byzantium and surrounding territories is a brief discussion in a letter of Demetrius Khomatianos, archbishop of Ohrid to Constantine Cabasilas, the metropolitan of Dyrrachium, in what is now Albania. Writing in the first half of the thirteenth century, Demetrius Khomatianos specifies that “Jews, Armenians, Ishmaelites and Hagarenes and remain-

**112** Robert Bonfil, et al., eds., *Jews in Byzantium*; Déroche, “Regards croisés des hérésiologues”; Gardette, *Une Culture entre Renaissance italienne et orient*; Holo, *Byzantine Jewry*; Von Falkenhausen, *Auf der Suche nach den Juden*; Kohen, *History of the Byzantine Jews*; Benin, “Jews, Christians, Muslims in Byzantine Italy”; Külzer, *Disputationes Graecae contra Iudaeos*; Sharf, *Jews and Other Minorities in Byzantium*; Eleuteri and Rigo, *Eretici Dissidenti Musulmani ed Ebrei a Bisanzio*; Bowman, *The Jews of Byzantium*; Galanté, *Les Juifs de Constantinople sous Byzance*; Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire 641–1204*.

**113** Rotman “Jews and Muslims in Byzantine Italy”; Anderson, “Islamic Spaces and Diplomacy in Constantinople”; Reinert, “The Muslim Presence in Constantinople 9th–15th Centuries”; Brand, “The Turkish Element in Byzantium.” My thanks to Prof. Johannes Pahlitzsch of Mainz University for his bibliographical suggestions on this subject.

**114** Sahas, *Byzantium and Islam*, 119, 278–79; Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 63–64, 86, 227–28, 297; Anderson, “Islamic Spaces and Diplomacy in Constantinople”; Reinert, “The Muslim Presence in Constantinople 9th–15th Centuries”; Balivet, *Romanie Byzantine*, 34–36.

ing ones of this type” may live in cities but that they should have their own section, lest they convert Christians to their customs.<sup>115</sup>

Understanding the function and implications of references to Jews in Armenian sources is complicated due to the paucity of systematic information about Jews in Armenian lands or Armenian–Jewish interactions outside of Armenian polities. Jewish and Muslim minorities in medieval Armenia or the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia are relatively little studied, although the frequency with which parts of this region changed between Armenian and Muslim hands, plus scattered archaeological indications and references in legal and other types of literature suggest that Jews and Muslims did dwell in or pass through these regions.<sup>116</sup> In addition to evidence in the Cairo Geniza of trade, travel and interaction between Jews and Armenians and in Armenian lands, there is a reference to Ḥabīb ibn Maslama al-Fihrī (ca. 617–662 CE), the Muslim leader of the forces which conquered Armenia providing safe passage to non-Muslim inhabitants of Dwin, the capitol of Armenia, and in his chronicle, the Armenian historian and Metropolitan of Syunik, Step’anos Ōrbelian (ca. 1250/1260–1303) mentions a “Jewish quarter” in Kapan, a town in southeast Armenia.<sup>117</sup> This is also the period from which the Jewish cemetery in Yeghegis dates.<sup>118</sup> Thus, while there are clear indications of Jewish presence in both Greater Armenia and in Cilicia during the Middle Ages, and of commercial relations between Jews and Armenians in Egypt, there is insufficient evidence to create a fulsome picture of Jewish life and culture and interactions with non-Jews in these lands. Contextualizing references to Jews in Armenian sources thus presents unique challenges, in which Jews are often hermeneutical rather than real.<sup>119</sup> The same is true of descriptions of shared or borrowed practices between Jews and Christians, as Garsoïan has shown regarding the T’ōndrakiçians.

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**115** “Ἰουδαίους, Ἀρμενίους, Ἰσμηλίτας, Ἀγαρηνοὺς, καὶ λοιποὺς τοιοῦτους”; Demetrius Khatatianos, *Responsa*, PG, 119, cols. 977/978; Bowman, *The Jews of Byzantium*, 221–22, nos. 18, 30.

**116** TS 13 J 21 fol. 17, translated in Goitein, “A Letter from Seleucia (Cilicia)”; MS Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Museum E 16 522, translated in Goitein *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders*, 330–33. Both manuscripts are available through the Friedberg Geniza project. See also Pogossian, and Nucciotti, eds., *Medieval Yeghegis*; Cowe, “Patterns of Armeno-Muslim Interchange”; Pogossian, “Gli ebrei e il giudaismo nelle fonte armene”; Pogossian, “Jews in Armenian Apocalyptic Traditions”; Ter-Ghevondyan, *Arab Emirates in Bagratid Armenia*; Vyronis, *Decline of Medieval Hellenism*; Goitein, “The Geniza Collection.”

**117** Ōrbelian, *History of the Region of Sisakan*, 334 (My thanks to Prof. Zaroui Pogossian of the University of Florence, for this reference and explanation of its content); Yāqūt, *Mu’jam al-Buldān*, 2015, 2:439; Russell, “On an Armenian Word List”; Sklare, “Ninth-Century Judeo-Arabic Texts”; Stone and Tochyan, *Jews in Ancient and Medieval Armenia*, 61–63; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 1:22, 4:182, 412; Goitein, “A Letter from Selucia”; Ter-Ghevondyan, *The Arab Emirates in Bagratid Armenia*, 131.

**118** Pogossian and Nucciotti, eds., *Medieval Yeghegis*; Amit and Stone, “Report of the Survey of a Medieval Jewish cemetery in Eghegis.”

**119** Pogossian, “Gli ebrei e il giudaismo nelle fonte armene”; Pogossian, “Jews in Armenian Apocalyptic Traditions.” Also see Chapter 3 and the bibliography cited there.

### Changing Laws, Shifting Territories

Déroche has emphasized the unchanging nature of legal depictions of Jews, or even Muslims; others, such as Tia Kobaba, have underscored the importance of paying attention to what laws are emphasized or re-emphasized in a given period. Kolbaba suggests that there were periods in which controlling heterodoxy, foreigners, or other religious or cultural threats were deemed less important than, for example, economic prosperity or military security. During periods focusing on prosperity or security, one may identify relative disinterest or “tolerance” for religious difference. At other times, the presence of religious difference was seen as a pressing threat, at which point one sees a renewal or elaboration of older laws and polemical topoi. For example, she links the renewed concern to prohibit Jews from entering imperial service to a time when there was a more substantial migration of Jews to Byzantine territories from Muslim lands in the eleventh century.<sup>120</sup> Precisely in the eleventh century, the third revision of the *Basilica*, itself a revision or recodification of the Justinian code reinstated negative language against the Jews, even as laws favourable to Jews and their religious institutions were eliminated or altered.<sup>121</sup> In addition to members of the church hierarchy, laypeople, who were involved in ecclesiastical diplomacy, served the government and/or were in some other way part of the Byzantine Christian intellectual elite, also had a stake in controlling religious, or even ethnic difference within the empire.<sup>122</sup> At times their views ran contrary to imperial practice or policy. For example, despite prohibitions against doing so, by the twelfth century, Emperor Manuel I (1143–1180 CE) had a Jewish doctor in his pay. More telling is Manuel’s attempt to change the catechism which Muslims wishing to convert to Christianity had to say, so that the God of Islam would be recognized as the same as the God worshipped by the Christians, rather than forcing Muslims to abjure the God of Muhammad. His conciliatory proposal was roundly condemned.<sup>123</sup> Imperial gestures toward inclusion and concomitantly conservative revisions of Byzantine law may be seen as polar reactions to the increasing religious plurality—both in terms of non-Christians and of diverse Christian denominations—within Byzantine territories. The refusal to recognize Muslims’ God as being the same as the one Christians and Jews worshipped, potentially hindered the development of shared rituals and sacred sites between Muslims and Byzantine Christians, however, as Manuel’s actions show, this view was not shared by the entire Christian populace. Because of the highly polemical nature of statements about non-Christians and the degree to which discussions of them were intertwined with intra-Christian debates, assessing the existence of real or imagined shared practices becomes particularly difficult in the Byzantine, and, as we shall see, Armenian contexts.

**120** Déroche, “Regards croisés des hérésiologues”; Kolbaba, “Byzantines, Armenians and Latins.”

**121** Linder, “The Legal Status of the Jews.”

**122** Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel I Komnenos*, 314–412.

**123** Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel I Komnenos*, 103–4, 386; Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 54; Balivet, *Romanie Byzantine*, 41–43.

In the early part of the period addressed by this book, Armenia had established itself as independent of Arab rule, but it was frequently in conflict with or had territories in part ruled by Byzantium. By 1048 the Seljuks, a branch of the Oghuz Turks, who were, by that point, Sunni Muslims, were making their presence felt in the region, and by 1064 Ani, the capital of Baghratid-ruled Armenia, had succumbed to Seljuk advances. The eleventh century was marked not simply by Jewish, but also Syrian and Armenian Christian, emigration to Byzantine territories and the establishment of Armenian principalities in the former Byzantine province of Cilicia. From the late eleventh through the fourteenth centuries, Byzantines, Armenians, Western Europeans who had come as participants in the crusades, Georgians, Seljuks and later, Mongols, vied for and sometimes gained control over regions or individual cities in the territory of the original kingdom of Armenia, Cilicia, and surrounding regions.<sup>124</sup> Additionally, the presence of dissenting Christian groups, from whom we have relatively little self-representation, such as the Paulicians, complicate any assessment of religious rhetoric and representation.<sup>125</sup> Zaroui Pogossian warns, therefore, that one cannot speak of “Armenians” or “Muslims,” and, I would add, “Christians,” in an abstract, overarching way, because of the ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity of Asia Minor during this period.<sup>126</sup>

In practical terms, Armenian legal and other literature that depicts interactions between Armenian Christians, Muslims, Jews, and other, unspecified non-Christian or “heretical” Christian groups, was sometimes written by authors when their Armenian region or polity of origin was in a position of relative political independence, vassalage, or subjugation to a Byzantine or European Christian ruler, a Muslim one, or a Mongol one, who may or may not have identified as Muslim. For example, Mxit’ar Goš (1130–1213 CE) the author of the first law code composed in Armenian, wrote his work when his own town, Ganjak, was contested territory between Georgia and local Muslim rulers, and the kingdom of Armenia was no longer an independent polity. By contrast, Cilicia, where he was also active and where his law code was also used, was in Armenian Christian hands. Robert Thomson emphasizes that part of the motivation for composing the law code, was to provide an alternative to going to Muslim courts and to ensure that Armenians were no longer dependent on the laws of foreigners.<sup>127</sup> Mxit’ar was also intimately involved in negotiations for a rapprochement between the Armenian, Catho-

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**124** Cowe, “Patterns of Armeno-Muslim Interchange”; Cowe, “Armenians in the Era of the Crusades”; Pogossian, ed. and transl., *The Letter of Love and Concord*, 7–44; Dadoyan, *Armenians in the Medieval Islamic World*, 2:7–64, 145–96; Kolbaba, “Byzantines, Armenians and Latins”; MacEvitt, *The Crusades*; Ter-Ghevondyan, *Arab Emirates in Bagratid Armenia*; Dagon, “Minorités ethniques.”

**125** Garsoïan, *Paulician Heresy*.

**126** Pogossian, “Jews in Armenian Apocalyptic Traditions.” Comment on 150. On the significance of medieval Christian plurality in these regions and in Europe, also see Weltecke, “Space, Entanglement and Decentralisation.”

**127** Mxit’ar Goš, *The Lawcode*, 13–23; Hewson, *Armenia*, 83. As Thomson notes, Syriac and Greek canon law texts had been translated into Armenian, and penitential guides had been composed prior to Mxit’ar’s *Lawcode*. See 12–13, 15, 23–24; Hartmann and Pennington, eds., *History of Byzantine and Eastern Canon Law*, 323–24.

lic, and Byzantine churches. There, he demonstrated familiarity with practices according to Western canon law, as well as Byzantium and Armenian, and used commonalities between Catholic and Armenian practice to argue his points with the Byzantines, without compromising the Armenian position.<sup>128</sup> Thus, Mxit'ar's work simultaneously reflects: Armenian ties with Byzantine, Western European, and Syriac Christian cultures and laws; the need to address daily life under Muslim dominance; law as it should be under Armenian Christian rule; potential interactions with Muslims and Christians with whom Armenians were in varying degrees of agreement or conflict and in a variety of power relationships; and, finally, varied, local, Armenian customs. Dawit' Ganjekec'i (d. 1140 CE), who was from the same region, writing earlier in the same century, lacked the cosmopolitan experience of Mxit'ar Goš, although the latter based portions of his law code on Dawit's penitential. This penitential which also sheds light on life under Muslim rule and local custom, perhaps even more so than Mxit'ar, who was concerned with creating a standardized form of Armenian canon law for all.<sup>129</sup> The Armenian texts of both of these authors and others need to be read while keeping in mind how a given author sought to balance between or use multiple real and rhetorical others. For the purposes of this study, the primary "others" in focus are Muslims, Jews, and Byzantine Christians, who were, at times, likened to Jews, although I will touch on intersections with Zoroastrian practice, when relevant.

The polemical approach in Byzantine and Armenian law codes in which church officials associated those whom they deemed "heretics" with Muslims and or Jews and accused these "heretics" of mixed practices is quite old. For example, Nina Garsoïan notes that during the second council of Nicaea in 787 the Patriarch Tarsius (ca. 730–806 CE) stated that the Iconoclasts had imitated the Jews, Saracens, pagans, Samaritans, Manichaeans and Phantasiasts.<sup>130</sup> Here Judaism, along with a list of seemingly every other religious group whom Tarsius could think of as non-Christian, was applied to the Iconoclasts, as a form of insult. While in some instances, placing Jews, Samaritans, Pagans, Manichaeans, and heretics in the same category may have been a legal practicality, in some texts from the fifth century onwards, Judaism is treated as a "sect" and described as equivalent to a kind of heresy. Thus, in legal literature, abjuration lists for those who converted to Byzantine orthodoxy, some chronicles and directly polemical literature not only from Byzantine authors, but also Armenian ones, the term "Judaizing" or comparisons with Judaism came to be applied to movements or individuals deemed heretical, even though any real connection to Jewish practices were often minimal. Occasionally the association between heresy and Judaism was based on proximity or contact with Jews, or those deemed similar to them, as in the case of accusations against Emperor Michael II (r. 820–829 CE), who was said to have been a member of the Athinganoi, a religious group described as adopting elements of Mosaic law and being in close association with the neighbouring Jewish community. However, even in this case, descriptions

**128** Pogossian, ed. and transl., *The Letter of Love and Concord*, 37–39, 43–44.

**129** Dorfmann, "The Admonitory Exhortations of Dawit"; Mxit'ar Goš, *The Lawcode*, 23, 27, 32–36, 48, 52, 56; Thomson, *Bibliography of Classical Armenian Literature*, 111.

**130** Garsoïan, *Paulician Heresy*, 200.

of Michael and the Athinganoi are so fraught with polemicizing, the exact nature and extent of any connection to Judaism or a Jewish community is difficult to ascertain.<sup>131</sup> Armenian discussions of “Judaizing” Christian groups are no less problematic. For example, the eleventh century Armenian scholar and eventual governor of Edessa, Gregory Magistros (ca. 990–1058 CE) asserted that the T’ondrakīans, a group considered by both the Armenian and Byzantine churches to be heretical, not only resembled sectarians but added Judaism and circumcision to their error, which made them much worse than their predecessors.<sup>132</sup> Accusing them of both Judaism and circumcision seems a bit redundant, however, the comparison is more precisely directed based on practices, rather than a broad association with all condemnable groups as in Tarsius’ remark. The T’ondrakīans was a later name for the Paulicians, a Christian group variously reported as having a dualist theology and a docetic, or adoptionist stance regarding Jesus’ nature. Their insistence on God’s unity (Monarchianism) and assertion that Jesus was not divine may have prompted the association with Jews (and Muslims) not only by Armenian authors but also by Greek writers, such as the chronicler, Georgios Monachos (842–867 CE). However, as Garsoïan points out, their putative founder, Paul of Samosata (200–275 CE) had also long been associated with Judaism by a wide variety of Christian authors.<sup>133</sup>

The Armenian legal tradition (like the Eastern and Western Syrian, Coptic, and Ethiopian churches) rejected the Council of Chalcedon, and thus had a somewhat different legal/theological trajectory than their Byzantine and Latin counterparts. Furthermore, although until Mxit’ar Goš’s lawbook, Armenians depended on translations of Greek and Syriac canon law collections, these translations often included interpolations, which addressed local issues and customary law, and, in late antiquity, Zoroastrian practice.<sup>134</sup> By the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, efforts to unify the Armenian, Byzantine, and Catholic churches intensified and prompted debates and a revisitation of long-standing disagreements regarding both ritual and the theology behind them. Armenian theologians sought to justify liturgical practices highlighted as questionable by Catholics, such as the use of unleavened bread for the Eucharist, while at the same time becoming more familiar with Latinate style polemical debate, and theological issues. Greek and Syriac, and then later Latin and Old French materials, both legal and polemical were translated into Armenian, some of which included anti-Jewish material.<sup>135</sup> As

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**131** Gardette, “The Judaizing Christians”; Holo, *Byzantine Jewry*, 43. Gardette notes that the Jewish elements of the Athinganoi resemble practices and attitudes of the Samaritans more than those of Jews.

**132** Conybeare, ed. and transl., *The Key of Truth*, 142; Grigor Magistroṣi, *Letters*, ed. K. Konstantis (Alexandropol, 1910) 166 (Armenian) as cited by Garsoïan, *Paulician Heresy*, 213.

**133** Garsoïan, *Paulician Heresy*, 210–13. On the two different branches of Paulicians see: 232–33. On the T’ondrakīans as equivalent to the Paulicians, see 13, 95–96, 139–40. The link between Paulicians and Muslims was mostly political, though doctrine also seems to have played a role. See 15, 128, 232, 233.

**134** Mardiroṣsian, *Le livre des Canons arméniens*, 25–30, 52–53, 103–4, 207, 479, 580.

**135** Hartmann and Pennington, *History of Byzantine Canon and Eastern Canon Law*, 314–26; La Porta, “Armeno-Latin Intellectual Exchange”; La Porta, “A Fourteenth-Century Armenian Polemic”;

noted above, included in this anti-Jewish tradition and language, was the comparison of theologies or practices deemed undesirable by a given author with those of Judaism.<sup>136</sup>

### **Impure, Disgusting and Symbolically Wrong: Foodways as a Barrier to Shared Practices**

When Byzantine Christians used foodways as a form of religious or ethnic division, the language used seems designed to evoke disgust at the choice of food and the bad manners involved in its consumption rather than outrage at a violation of ritual purity laws.<sup>137</sup> For example, the Byzantine chronicler, Niketas Choniates (ca.1155–1217 CE) frequently attributed unchecked, gluttonous behaviour to emperors or other individuals of whom he disapproved, asserted that Byzantine soldiers became ill from eating unaccustomed food, described the smelly, bizarre (to him) combinations of foodstuffs concocted by Latin Christians, and detailed Europeans', specifically Sicilians', willful destruction and mockery of Byzantines' food by urinating in it and farting.<sup>138</sup> He did not, however, speak of foods which were unclean in the sense that they violated divine or church law. The twelfth-century canonist and patriarch of Antioch, Theodore Balsamon, complains that the Latins ate blood and strangled animals, which was, in fact prohibited by Byzantine canon law, but does not describe the food of Western European Christians as unclean or able to pollute people or utensils.<sup>139</sup> Some members of the Byzantine clergy were inclined to condemn the Latins and other Christian communities for more than the use of leavened bread or the consumption of blood, however. In the mid eleventh century, Peter, the Patriarch of Antioch felt compelled to chide Michael I Keroularios (ca. 1000–1059 CE), Patriarch of Constantinople, for his criticisms of other communities' eating habits as unlawful, by citing 1 Timothy 4:14 and Acts 10:11–15, both of which insist that all food is licit. Chapter 10 of Acts especially, overturns Jewish food proscriptions. A number of scholars have emphasized that Peter of Antioch's comments largely represent the norm regarding food impurity in the Byzantine church.<sup>140</sup>

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Kolbaba, "Byzantines, Armenians, and Latins"; Pogossian, ed. and transl., *The Letter of Love and Concord*, 22–44.

**136** See above for references and below for more detailed discussion.

**137** Bayri, *Warriors, Martyrs and Dervishes*, 70–88; Kolbaba, *Byzantine Lists*, 145–55.

**138** Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 1:57–58, 145–46, 302–5, 594–95, 624; Niketas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium*, 33–34, 82–83, 167–69, 326–27, 342.

**139** Balsamon, PG 137, Canon 67, cols. 747/748. Kolbaba, *Byzantine Lists*, 148. On the prohibition against consuming blood or strangled animals see canon 67 of the council of Trullo, also known as the Quinisext Council, held in 692 CE. For the Greek text and English translation of the council see Nedungatt and Featherstone, eds., *Trullo Revisited*.

**140** [Michael Keroularios], *Epistolae*, PG 120, cols. 799/800–801/802, paras. 7 and 8. For Tia Kolbaba's English translation of Peter of Antioch's letter see <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/1054peter-of-antioch-to-michael-keroularios1.asp>. Compare with Michael's remarks in his original letter to Peter of Antioch, PG 120, cols. 789/790–791/792, para. 12. Siecienski, *Beards, Azymes, and Purgatory*, 136; Crostini, "What was Kosher in Byzantium?"; Kolbaba, *Byzantine Lists*, 35–37, 70–73, 147–48.

Other Byzantine criticisms regarding food relate to either sharing food in a time, place, or manner which might be interpreted as Judaizing, an issue to which I will turn momentarily. The salient point for consideration here is that Byzantine regulations and attitudes toward the food of non-Christians or even Christians they deemed heretical did not preclude eating or sharing such food. This position stands in contrast to what one may find in Armenian legal collections from the eleventh century and onwards. Armenian Christians were quite concerned with ritual impurity. For example, in his penitential, Dawit' Ganjekec'i prohibits eating or drinking bread, wine, cheese, meat, vegetables, grapes of infidels, except those fruits which have shells or rinds, and medicine, if it is not *theriaca*, or similarly filthy medicine. Similarly, grapes picked or trampled by a non-Christian are not fit for use in church.<sup>141</sup> In such Armenian Christian regulations marking the food, physical touch or presence of those outside their own religious community are reminiscent of, though not identical to, Zoroastrian and Jewish prohibitions against consuming all or some foods and beverages handled by religious outsiders.<sup>142</sup>

As noted in chapter four, communities with such restrictions created barriers to certain kinds of shared rituals as well as to general socializing, in contrast to other communities who developed laws which allowed for and regulated attendance of religious services or donations to or from outsiders. The Armenian Christians, therefore, stand out during this period as potentially less receptive to shared practices than Byzantine, or various Arabic- or Syriac-speaking Christian communities, even those in Asia Minor.

By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the division of animals into categories of pure and impure, edible and inedible, had become pivotal in Catholic Armenian and Western European accusations of Judaizing against Armenian Christians who had retained their affiliation with the Armenian church. The Catholicos Simēon Erewanc'i (1763–1780 CE) embraced the parallel between Armenian Orthodox and Jewish practice, arguing that if even the Pharisees obeyed the law of God, how much more so should Christians? Catholics, therefore, were the ones who neglected to observe this very basic divine regulation. Other authors from this period and later criticized Catholics for eat-

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**141** [Dawit' Ganjekec'i] *Penitential*, Canons 10, 11. In Canon 94, carrion and the hare are designated unclean (these are also unclean in Jewish law) and Dawit' condemns those who create strife on this subject, possibly referring to those inclined to follow the more liberal, Byzantine way of thinking. On Dawit's use of the category of clean and unclean animals see Dorfmann, "The *Admonitory Exhortations* of Dawit'." Compare with the Canons of Yovhannēs Mandukani (Catholicos 478–490 CE) in *Ordonnancement du livre des canons arméniens*, 894/895–896/897, PYM 1. Theriac was a compound drug, used in antiquity and throughout the Middle Ages and much of the early modern era, which was thought to be effective against many illnesses, most especially poison, since theriac itself was said to consist in part of poisonous substances. On theriac see various articles in Wexler, ed., *History of Toxicology and Environmental Health: Antiquity*, and Wexler, ed., *History of Toxicology and Environmental Health: Middle Ages and Renaissance*.

**142** Compare Dawit's *Penitential* with the somewhat later Zoroastrian legal text: Āturfarnbag and Farnbag-Srō, *Rivāyat*, 25.3. I am indebted to Ms. Neda Darabian of Ruhr Universität Bochum for this reference. For a discussion of law and bibliography of Jewish purity laws relating to food and non-Jews, see Chapter 4 of this book. For Zoroastrian food law relating to outsiders, see Daryae, "Food Purity and Pollution." On the connections between Zoroastrian and Jewish law and purity, see Secunda, *The Iranian Talmud*; Mokhtarian, *Rabbis, Sorcerers, Kings, and Priests*.

ing *ḥarām* (forbidden) food according to Muslim law as a retort against criticisms of food purity divisions which were customary among the Armenian Orthodox.<sup>143</sup> Thus, the failing of Catholics, in these instances was the *lack* of a shared practice with the other, surrounding religious communities. Seemingly the fact that these non-Christians also obeyed similar food purity regulations was proof of the truth of the Armenian Orthodox position. By contrast, Catholic Christians continued to evoke long-standing polemic which linked traditional Armenian Christian practice with that of Jews as a way of invalidating Armenian Orthodoxy. The choice to accede to commonalities between Jewish or Muslim practice and that of Armenian Orthodox Christians reflects a different attitude than those of the Middle Ages, for, as we shall see, Armenian Christians from this period refuted attempts to associate them with Jews.

More common and more systematic than polemic regarding food based on custom, ethnicity, or purity, were prohibitions relating to ritual food which either implied engaging in a ritual with another religious community, most often Jews, or condemned food habits which resembled that of another, again, usually those of Jews. Canon 11 of the 692 council of Trullo seems to have straddled both contingencies. There clergy and lay-people are forbidden from eating unleavened bread like or with the Jews (παρὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων).<sup>144</sup> Since the preposition παρὰ (*para*) can mean either “in the presence of”, “beside,” “with” or “parallel to” or “like” it is somewhat unclear whether lawgivers feared socialization with actual Jews or imitation of Jews. The rest of the canon prohibits becoming a family member with Jews, seeking and accepting medical assistance from them, or bathing in their company, all of which strongly suggests that preventing intimate socializing between Christians and Jews was the primary goal of this canon. In canon 99, however, an adverb ἰουδαϊκῶς (*ioudaikos*), doing something like a Jew, is used to characterize the action of bringing cooked meat into the sanctuary and reserving a portion for the priest. Priests may accept gifts of meat, but only *outside* the church building, to avoid any confusion with what Byzantines considered to be ritual offering which Jews were commanded bring to the Temple and to donate a portion to the priests.<sup>145</sup>

Balsamon, in his commentary on Council of Trullo, attempts to clarify the slightly ambiguous wording of Canon 11 on the one hand, but also elaborates on the discussion of unleavened bread in a way that allows him to criticize Latin practice and link it with that of the Jews. Initially he explains that: “The holy fathers ruled that none should have communion with the Jews, we should not join with them in their festivals, nor take, nor eat the flatbread made by them, nor accept medicine from them nor bathe with them.”<sup>146</sup> His rephrasing of the canon places social activities with Jews per se, and eating the bread

**143** Ohanjanyan, “Armenian–Jewish Connections”; Erewanc’i, *Girk’or*, 69 as cited in Ohanjanyan.

**144** Nedungatt and Featherstone, eds., *Trullo Revisited*. The Greek text and translation may also be found at: <http://telma.irht.cnrs.fr/outils/relmin/extrait268341/>.

**145** Lev. 7:11–18; Kolbaba, *Byzantine Lists*, 69, 135, 201; Sharf, “Animal Sacrifice in the Armenian Church,” in *Jews and Other Minorities in Byzantium*.

**146** Μηδεμίαν κοινωνίαν ἔχειν ἡμᾶς μετὰ των Ἰουδαίων οἱ θέλοντες διορζονται μὴ συνεορτάζαιν τούτοις ἡμᾶς μηδὲ λαμβάνειν καὶ ἐσθίειν τὰ παρ’ αὐτων τηρικαῦτα γινόμενα ἄζθμα μηδὲ ἱατρεῦεσθαι παρὰ τούτων ἢ σθλλουεσθαι; Balsamon, PG 137, Canon 11, cols. 551/552.

they make, at the centre. Unleavened bread is central to what follows, but there Balsamon is careful to explain that one should not eat the unleavened bread of heretics, but the canon does not prohibit eating flatbread altogether “rather from celebrating with flatbread like the Jews”.<sup>147</sup> For him this means misunderstanding the Pascal celebration as being a sacrifice, with bread and lamb, despite Jesus having abolished all the rituals of the Jews. Jewish use of flatbread during Passover he likens to the customs of heretics and Latins who do celebrate with unleavened bread. In this example, socialization with Jews is to be avoided, but the discussion of their ritual food practices becomes a stepping stone for condemning Christians of whom Balsamon disapproves. Other Byzantine canonists and polemicists take up the issues raised against Jews and Armenians in the council of Trullo, including the tactic of linking specific Armenian (or other Christian groups whom they condemn) and Jewish practices together. For example, the twelfth-century monk, Euthymios Zigabenos ties both the Armenian use of unleavened bread and sacrificial animals, particularly at Easter, to Jewish practice, although his description and refutation of these customs are far more detailed than those in the council of Trullo. He explores whether or not unleavened bread was consumed during the last supper and whether or not this meal occurred during Passover, when Jews were required to eat unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Ultimately, he decides that it was not.<sup>148</sup> His exposition on whether the wine of the eucharist should be diluted with water—a practice the Armenians rejected—devolves into an assertion that the sacrifice of animals had been abolished and had no salvific effect, yet the Armenians “sacrificed following the Jew” (θύοντες κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαϊκὴν).<sup>149</sup> He and Balsamon were but two of many Byzantine theologians to engage in such polemical comparisons between Jews and “wrong” Christians.<sup>150</sup>

Armenians and Latin Christians were well aware of the accusations levelled at them by the Byzantines. The two twelfth-century Armenian writers, Nersēs Šnorhali (1102–1173 CE) and Pōlos Tarōnac’i (d. 1123 CE) contested accusations that the *matał*, or sacrificial meal, was comparable in meaning or practice to Jewish sacrifice. Indeed, as they and other collections of Armenian canon law indicate, the *matał* was about distributing food to the poor on saints’ days and Easter, rather than a form of sacrificial expiation. The primary concern among Armenian religious authorities was to prevent priests from taking too much of the food themselves, eating or allowing others to eat

**147** ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀζύμων κατὰ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἐοράζειν; Balsamon, PG 137, Canon 11, Italics mine.

**148** Euthymios Zigabenos, *Panoply*, PG, 130 cols.1179/1180–1181/1182.

**149** Euthymios Zigabenos, *Panoply*, PG, 130 cols. 1183/1184–1185/1186.

**150** Other examples include Pseudo-Isaac, *Oratio contra Armenios*, PG 132, cols. 1175/1176–1179/1180, 1181/1182–1185/1186, 1225/1226, 1235/1236; [Michael Keroularios], *Epistolae*, PG 120, cols. 764/765–781/782; Leo of Ohrid, *Epistulae*, 180–86, 208, 212; Matthew Blasteres, *Syntagma Alphanumericum*, PG 144, cols. 1345/1346–1347/1348; Ohanjanyan, “Armenian–Jewish Connections”; Siecienski, *Beards, Azymes, and Purgatory*, 104–9, 117–23, 127–33, 155–56; Smith, *And Taking Bread*, 57–69, 97, 115, 139, 154–76; Kolbaba, “East Roman Anti-Armenian Polemic”; Kolbaba, “Byzantines, Armenians and Latins”; Kolbaba, *Byzantine Lists*; Sharf, “Animal Sacrifice in the Armenian Church,” in *Jews and Other Minorities in Byzantium*.

inside the church, and what kinds of animals were allowed as sacrifices, under what circumstances, and when.<sup>151</sup> In truth, the Armenian practice of *matał*, with its emphasis on animal sacrifice as a moment for sharing of food, and condemnation of those who do not or do not do so enough, is likely to represent an accommodation or adoption of Sasanian- and early Islamic-era Zoroastrian attitudes toward animal sacrifice and food sharing.<sup>152</sup> Another possibility is that the attitudes toward animal sacrifice in Zoroastrian and Armenian Christian communities developed together. Early modern Armenian authors continued to insist on the differences between Jewish and Armenian sacrifice, although there is some recognition of the similarities between Armenian custom and those of Jews on Yom Kippur or Muslims on *'id al-'aḏḩā*, which celebrates the patriarch Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, or *'id al-fiṭr*, which celebrates the end of Ramadan.<sup>153</sup> Thus, again, one sees a shift in attitudes among early modern Armenians toward parallels between Jewish, Muslim, and Armenian Christian practice, although in this case, authors were not willing to accept a direct equivalency between Jewish and Armenian ritual.

While not all Armenian-Byzantine-Latin accusations of Judaizing were involved with food, it is striking that so many were. As many who have studied these debates have indicated, the symbolism assigned these ritual foodstuffs and the theological implications of that symbolism, were fundamental to this polemical exchange. For example, for Byzantine authors, to give unleavened bread at the Eucharist was to deny the dual nature of Christ as dictated in the Council of Chalcedon, and, since leaven was "life," lifeless flatbread could never embody Christ.<sup>154</sup> Yet also fundamental to these exchanges, was not only theology, or the tendency to attribute all "heresy" to Judaism, but also the focus on Jewish practice, as these Christian authors imagined it, plus outrage that any group of Christians would imitate Jewish ritual, especially rituals of food. Ritual food was both especially powerful and especially threatening. Much like al-Ṭurtūshī's "Christian" doughnuts and cheese fritters, which Andalusī Muslims were using in their celebrations of *'id al-'aḏḩā* and *'id al-fiṭr*, eating the ritual food of another at one's own festivals breeched both local markers of identity and religious boundaries. Accusing the religious other of "foreign" as well as religiously "wrong" food was a way of magnifying their status as outsiders.<sup>155</sup> Barbara Crostini, referring to Byzantine food polemic, argues

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**151** *Ordonnancement du livre des canons arméniens*, 312/313–328/329, all canons listed there, 430/431–432/433, YMD 8; Ohanjanyan, "Armenian–Jewish Connections"; Sharf, "Animal Sacrifice in the Armenian Church" in *Jews and Other Minorities in Byzantium*.

**152** Payne, *A State of Mixture*, 118. To the best of my knowledge, Armenian Christian texts do not emphasize the animals' well-being, as Payne notes for a number of Zoroastrian texts. Also, the Armenian and Syrian Churches in the region often opposed eating with outsiders, specifically "Magians," whereas Zoroastrian festivals allowed for the distribution of food to non-Zoroastrians. Payne, *A State of Mixture*, 119–24

**153** Ohanjanyan, "Armenian–Jewish Connections."

**154** Sicienski, *Beards, Azymes, and Purgatory*, esp. 8; Crostini, "What was Kosher in Byzantium?"; Kolbaba, "East Roman Anti-Armenian Polemic"; Kolbaba, "Byzantines, Armenians and Latins"; Kolbaba, *Byzantine Lists*; Smith, *And Taking Bread*, 25, 56, 58, 137, 165–66, 176–77.

**155** al-Ṭurtūshī, *Kitāb al-ḩawādith wa-al-bida'*, ed. Talbi, 140–41 and in Melville and Ubaydli, eds.,

that “[t]he Jewish presence in the Byzantine empire, therefore both territorially and in the diaspora, kept alive the issue of clean and unclean foods as a marker of both ethnic and religious identity, further strengthened by the continuation of the ‘kosher’ mentality on the part of Muslims.”<sup>156</sup> Thus, while the “Judaism” or Jewish-like behaviours which Byzantine, Latin, and Armenian Christians attributed to one another and other Christian groups, was often a product of imagination and polemical rhetoric, and, unlike many of the objections to shared practices or socializing examined in this book, was largely unrelated to fears of interaction with Jews (or Muslims), the spectre of living Jews, with their ritual foods and purity laws, fuelled these comparisons. Making such a case for Armenian polemic is more tenuous; however, Armenians were well aware of and drew from Byzantine and Syriac portrayals of Jews and Judaism, on the one hand, and had ample opportunity to encounter Jews in Anatolia, Cilicia, central Byzantine lands and the Middle East, on the other. Thus, it is possible that Crostini’s observations about the impact of Jews’ presence on Byzantine intra-Christian polemic and law may be applicable to Armenian authors as well.

### No Place for Outsiders: Churches and Non-Christians

Earlier canon collections from Byzantium, like Laodicea (363 CE) or the second council of Nicea (787 CE) which were translated into Armenian, repeated prohibitions against allowing heretics or non-Christians to enter a church, or against going to the martyriums of “heretics.”<sup>157</sup> Dawit’ Ganjekec’i went further, for in his penitential he indicated that physical contact with an “impure” animal, or an “*aylazgi*,” meaning “stranger,” or “foreigner” usually connotating a non-Christian, could render an object or space unclean and potentially unfit for Christian use.<sup>158</sup> Canon 13 is particularly telling, for there he creates a hierarchy. If an “*aylazgi*” enters a church without committing violence, one should sprinkle water and sweep where his hand or foot has reached, and read from the prophets, apostles, and gospel, and recite a prayer. An *aylazgi* who enters and behaves contemptuously or goes to the area where the priest would lead the services, the same ritual is required, but no service may be held in the church for a day. Those sacramental vessels touched by the outsider, if valuable must be washed and reconsecrated; less valuable ones should no longer be used for the service. Dawit’ notes that if an ani-

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*Christians and Moors in Spain*, 3:120–21; Cuffel, “Legal but not Licit” and Chapter 5 of this book.

**156** Crostini, “What was Kosher in Byzantium?,” quotation on 169.

**157** Madirossian with Ananean, eds., *Ordonnancement du livre des canons arméniens*, 426/427, LAO 9,34; 488/489, LAO 6,33; 816/817, SCN 60, 63, 84, 85.

**158** [Dawit’ Ganjekec’i] *Penitential*, Canons 12–13, 20, 80; Dorfmann, “The *Admonitory Exhortations* of Dawit’” My thanks to Prof. Zaroui Pogossian of the University of Florence for her input on Armenian vocabulary and texts and for alerting me to Dorfmann’s article. All errors are my own. Dowsett translates *aylazgi* as “infidel.” Dorfmann states that the term could refer to foreigner in either an ethnic or religious sense, but by the early Islamic period it was used to designate Muslims.

mal, whether clean or unclean enters the church the same rule applies.<sup>159</sup> The careful description of various possibilities and behaviours suggest that “*aylazgi*,” in this case Muslims, did enter Armenian churches. That some came without doing violence hints that local Muslims may have come either out of curiosity or reverence. Unable to expel them, Armenian Christians felt the need to purify their holy space in the aftermath of such a visitation. The reference to violence reflects the realities of living in a contested territory, often under Muslim rule.<sup>160</sup> The canon also places religious outsiders on a par with animals, which potentially implies a strong repugnance for “infidels” in addition to assigning them an impure status. Yet another interpretation of purification regulations and the establishment of a protocol for addressing the presence of a religious outsider is that it served as a strategy by which Armenian Christians could mark distinctions between self and other and having done so, still allow interactions.

This regulation and attitude stand in stark contrast to the Syriac and Arabic canon law codes discussed in chapter four, in which non-Christians seemingly entered the church and gave donations, including objects which potentially could be used in the service. In Dawit’s penitential the mere touch of an “*aylazgi*” compromised the sacrality of objects in the church.<sup>161</sup> Again, the specificity and detail of these regulations suggest that outsiders did indeed seek out sacred spaces and objects of Armenian Christians, much as we know Muslims in the Middle East entered churches and, occasionally, participated in rituals therein. The reaction, at least of Dawit’, was to prohibit, rather than accommodate such intrusions.

Regulations aimed at discouraging shared festivals, rituals, or spaces between Christians and non-Christians, or “heretics” were already decreed in late antiquity, such as in the fourth-century synod of Laodicea. These earlier laws and their expansions or translations by later Byzantine and Armenian canonists, mostly address the issue of Christians going to the sacred spaces and religious services of Jews, or “false” Christians, rather than religious outsiders attempting to enter the churches or monasteries of the faithful.<sup>162</sup> Canon 6 of Laodicea prohibits heretics from entering a church while they

**159** [Dawit’ Ganjekeci] *Penitential*, Canon 13.

**160** On the wars and shifting allegiances, including between Muslim Kurdish (Shaddādi) or Turkish (Seljuq) leaders during this period, see Dorfmann, “The *Admonitory Exhortations of Dawit’*”; Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History*, 5–106.

**161** In addition to Canon 13, also see Canons 11 and 12. Canon 93 stipulates that if one sees a cross in the hands of an infidel, one is obliged to purchase it, regardless of the price.

**162** The relevant canons of Laodicea are 9, 37–39. Later, Byzantine discussions of the this and other relevant earlier canons include Balsamon, PG 137 Canons of the Apostles, Canon 64 cols. 163/164–165/166, Canon 71 cols. 181/182, Trullo, Canon 11 col. 551/552, Canons of Laodicea, Canon 9 cols 1353/1354–1355/1356, Canons 37–39, cols. 1391/1392–1393/1394; Demetrius Khomatianos, *Responsa*, PG 119, cols. 1045/1046–1047/1048; Matthew Blasteres. *Syntagma Alphabeticum*, PG 144, cols.1049/1050–1051/1052, 1345/1346–1347/1348. For Armenian versions see Mardirossian with Ananean, eds., *Ordonnancement du livre des canons arméniens*, 426/427–428/429 LAO 9, LAO 34, SCN 85, 880/881–882/883 CAP 16, CAP 17, CCL 66, LAO 9, LAO 32, LAO 33, LAO 34, LAO 37, LAO 38, GLI 4, 892/893–894/895 SCN 63, ECB 76, 898/899–900/901 CLL60, CLL 65, CLL 66, ATC 1, LAO 37.

are still heretics but does not mention non-Christians. Additional regulations discuss what to do with those who had converted to another religion or form of Christianity or whom to admit who wished to be baptized. The latter I will discuss separately in the next section. Byzantine commentators on the Synod of Laodicea like Balsamon or John Zonaras (ca. 1070–1140 CE), the historian-theologian who lived much of his adult life in Constantinople working for Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081–1118 CE), saw this law as applying specifically and only to heretics or, in Zonaras' case, to those heretics who had "lapsed" from the true faith.<sup>163</sup> This category encompassed insincere Jewish converts to Christianity as well.<sup>164</sup> The Armenian rendition of Canon 6 of Laodicea adds the word for "stranger," "*aylazgi*," designating a non-Christian, to the text, so that both heretics and non-Christians are forbidden entry.<sup>165</sup> I would suggest that this alteration plus Dawit' Ganjekec'i's extended discussion of what to do if a non-Christian were to enter a church, indicate that Armenians shaped their religious law to address the realities of a religiously pluralistic environment over which they were not always in complete control. Part of this environment included developing a strategy or policy to deal with the persistent interest of non-Christians, probably Muslims, in Christian holy spaces. While the Armenian solution, as reflected in the *Penitential*, differed from those of other Christian communities, the phenomenon of Muslim interest in churches and monasteries was a common one, as we have seen for other regions.<sup>166</sup> Furthermore, extensive evidence of inter-marriage between Muslims and Christians, despite prohibitions to the contrary, may have produced a population which identified or would have been identified by others, as Muslim, and therefore "outsiders" to the Christian community, but who felt strongly drawn to churches because of their mixed heritage.<sup>167</sup> Regardless of the identity and motivations of those "strangers," Dawit' depicts such individuals as imposing their

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**163** Balsamon (and Zonaras) PG 137, Laodicea, Canon 6, cols. 1349/1350.

**164** Balsamon, PG 137, Conc. VII Oecumen, Canon VIII, cols 915/916.

**165** Mardirossian with Ananean, eds., *Ordonnancement du Livre des Canons Arméniens*, 882/883 LAO 6. Dorfmann, "Admonitory Exhortations of Dawit'" Again, my thanks to Zaroui Pogossian for checking the Armenian original for me.

**166** See Chapter 4 of this book. Prior to the spread of Islam, when the canons of Laodicea and other early canon collections were being translated and circulating in Armenia, the strangers could have been members of local religious groups, or Zoroastrians. On the translation of these canons see Hubert Kaufhold, "Sources of Canon Law in the Eastern Churches," in Hartmann and Pennington, eds., *History of Byzantine and Eastern Canon Law*, 216–17.

**167** Shukurov, "Harem Christianity"; Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 55–57. Compare with De Nicola, *Women in Mongol Iran*, 9, 44, 114; Eastmond, *Tamta's World*, although these deal with the Mongol rather than the Seljuk era. For Armenian law on inter-marriage or cross-religious sexual partnerships see: Mxit'ar Goš, *The Lawcode*, chap. 163, p. 220; [Dawit' Ganjekec'i] *Penitential*, Canons 16, 17, 18, 19; Mardirossian with Ananean, eds., *Ordonnancement du Livre des Canons Arméniens*, 814/815 LAO 31, SCN 86. Compare with Demetrius Khomatianos, *Responsa*, PG 119, cols. 1065/1066. Slavery or captivity through war and the forced or "encouraged" conversion of slaves or captives also may have produced families and children of ambiguous or mixed religious affiliations in practice, if not officially. See Mxit'ar Goš, *The Lawcode*, chaps. 54–56, pp. 157–58, chap. 110, pp. 191–92, chap. 206 pp. 249–50.

presence in Armenian churches. The purification rituals, therefore, serve as resistance to a kind of forced sharing.

While Byzantines did not have the same level of strict, direct legislation against Muslims entering churches as Armenians, anecdotal evidence indicates that many Byzantines disapproved of allowing Muslims to access to churches and monasteries or to touch objects or vestments linked to the church or saints. We have already seen that the fourteenth-century Ibn Baṭūṭa was allowed to enter some Byzantine holy places but forbidden to enter others without converting to Christianity.<sup>168</sup> Niketas Choniates, while outlining the relationship between Emperor Manuel I (1118–1180 CE) and Sultan Kilij Arslan II (r. 1156–1192 CE), described a triumphal march into Constantinople headed by both the emperor and the sultan. The planned triumph was disrupted by an earthquake. Furthermore:

The clergy of the holy church contended (and the emperor himself received their words as evil omens) that God was wroth, and that under no circumstances would he tolerate an impious man to show himself and participate in a triumph adorned by all-hallowed furnishings and embellished by the likenesses of saints and sanctified by the images of Christ.<sup>169</sup>

Here, the implication seems to be that holy objects—blessed clothing and images of saints—make the procession a sacred event. As a result, the participation of the Muslim Sultan and his proximity to such objects are inappropriate and provoke God's wrath, which takes the form of an earthquake. Thus, in Byzantium, separating non-Christians from the sacred spaces, objects, and rituals of Christians was not set by law, as in Armenia, but by the whim of a given caretaker or cleric, or divine intervention. For both, the impulse is to rebuff religious others, rather than accommodate or incorporate them into Christian rituals and spaces. In the core territories of Byzantium, access to the sacred could be regulated. In Ganjak, and other regions of the Armeniate world, clergy could make laws, but at best, these only influenced their parishioners, not the various Muslim and other non-Christians around them.

### **The Ritual makes the Wo/man? Sharing, Imitation, and Disputed Christian Affiliation**

In both Byzantine and Armenian context, engaging in rituals which were interpreted as having been taken from another religious tradition called into question a given individual or group's status as a true Christian. Framed another way, accusing a group of engaging in such rituals challenged that group's membership as part of God's people.

**168** Ibn Baṭūṭa, *Voyages*, 2:433–43 and see Chapter 4 of this book.

**169** “έφασκον δὲ οἱ τοῦ θεοῦ νεώ καὶ τοῦ βήματος (καὶ αὐτὸς βασιλεὺς οὐκ ἀγαθὰς κληδονὰς ἐδέχετο τὰ λεγόμενα) μηνίειν τὸ θεῖον καὶ μηδ’ ὅλως ἀνέχεσθαι προκούψεν ὅλως εἰς θρίαμβον μὴ θεοσεβείας ἄδρα μετεσχηκότα, ὃν κοσμοῦσιν ἐπιπλα παναγῆ καὶ ἁγίων ἔκτθηα διειλήφασαι καὶ χαρακτῆρ καθαγιαίνει Χριστοῦ.”; Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 1:119; Niketas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium*, 67.

Most of the examples discussed so far revolve around food, sacralized or otherwise. Yet foodways were not the only target of such discussions. Other types of “imitation” were imagined whereas others point to interaction and shared rituals between Armenian and Byzantine Christians and a variety of religious others.

As noted earlier, Zoroastrians and interactions with them were part of the Armenian legal tradition. Regulating interactions with Zoroastrians also included condemning the adoption of Zoroastrian practice within the church. For example, concerns about bishops and other church officials treating these offices as an inherited position, or extensive explanations of the prohibition against marrying individuals within one’s immediate family are reflections of Zoroastrian influence on local, late antique Christian practice.<sup>170</sup> The tradition of hereditary positions within the church was one of the customs Byzantines came to condemn as an example of Armenian “Judaizing, as well as being a debated issue within the Armenian church itself.”<sup>171</sup> As with the custom of *matał*, Byzantine authors seem to have been unaware of or uninterested in the larger cultural-religious context from which this “imitation” sprang, and associated Armenian difference with the religious other, who, in Byzantine eyes, was the most insulting, namely Jews.

A word of caution is in order, however. So far, the numerous prohibitions against socializing with Jews in the form of bathing, marriage, or eating, going to or donating to their synagogues, etc. which are repeated in canon law texts have been analyzed in light of Armenian Byzantine polemical impulses against other Christians. Yet the instructions by Demetrius Khomatianos, noted above, on how to distribute and restrict Jewish, Armenian, and Muslim populations in Byzantine-controlled cities were not part of any polemical diatribe against an imaginary religious other. Rather, his responsum outlined recommended policy for managing religious minorities in an urban context. Presumably, his concern that if these non-Orthodox were allowed to dwell, worship and wander in cities at will, they might convert others, also reflects anxieties about the lived realities of a religiously mixed population. That people converted back and forth between Islam and Christianity, or allowed others to think that they did, as has already been alluded to. Likewise, Christians oscillated between theologies and Armenian vs. Byzantine identity.<sup>172</sup> While, as indicated, not enough information exists to construct a detailed picture of Jewish populations in Armenia and their daily interactions with Armenian Christians,

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**170** Mardirossian, *Le livre des Canons arméniens*, 78–85, 141–142; Payne, *A State of Mixture*, 93–94, 106–117; Mardirossian with Ananean, eds., *Ordonnement du Livre des Canons Arméniens*: On inheriting positions within the church: 166/167, CCL27, 168/169 SPT 13, 172/173 SPT 47, 178/179–182/183, YAP 8, THD 1, DUN 6, DUN 8; on degrees of consanguinity allowed in marriage: 708/709–710/711, SHV 13, SEW 3, SIO 16. As Payne notes, Syriac Christian legalists were also concerned with this problem in Iran, and addressed both Zoroastrian and Biblical (Jewish) law in this area.

**171** Mardirossian, *Le livre des Canons arméniens*, 353–55; Nedungatt and Featherstone, eds., *Trullo Revisited*, Canon 33. The Greek text and translation may also be found at: <http://telma.irht.cnrs.fr/outils/relmin/extrait268341/>; Balsamon, PG 137, Canon 33, cols. 625/626.

**172** See, for example, the beginning of the speech attributed by Niketas Choniates to Emperor John Komnenos II (1087–1143 CE) as he presented his youngest son Manuel. (Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 1: 42–43, Niketas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium*, 24–25). Therein John refers to those who

more is known about Jews in Byzantium. Relevant to the current study is that we know that Jews were an integral part of both the local economy and long-distance trade in Byzantium and that Christians in Byzantine territories *did* occasionally convert to Judaism, and Byzantine Christian captives became slaves in Jewish households abroad and were converted to Judaism as per Jewish law and sometimes re-converted to Christianity.<sup>173</sup> This pattern is similar to that identified for those who “switched sides” from Byzantine to Muslim or Armenian and back again. None of these pieces of information directly demonstrate that prohibitions against socializing and shared rituals between Christians and Jews in Byzantine law codes were directed at real interactions. Nevertheless, they suggest a cultural environment where shared rituals between Jews and Christians would be plausible, and show that Judaism was an attractive option for some Christians. Such attraction would have been fostered through regular (religious), and, from the perspective of Byzantine canon lawyers and members of the government, illicit interaction. The interpretation of Byzantine Christian injunctions against shared Jewish-Christian practice relative to lived Jewish-Christian interactions, must, therefore, remain open until more definitive evidence comes to light.

Evidence for certain shared practices between Muslims and Christians in Byzantine and Armenian lands is more conclusive. In 885 CE, Photius, the patriarch of Constantinople, wrote to Leo, the archbishop of Calabria. Photius’ letter addressed a number of issues: the appropriate time and place and other conditions for baptism, the status of presbyters and deacons whose wives had been violated by barbarians, whether to allow requests from Muslim women to baptize their children, whether to bring the holy offering to Christians who were held captive by the Muslims, and the status of children who were the result of Muslim predations.<sup>174</sup> The issue of baptizing the children of Muslim women will be the focus of the remainder of this section, however the other topics raised in the epistle provide context. Muslim and Byzantine powers were vying for control over Calabria during the ninth-century, so that issues like the status of war-captives and slaves, or the offspring of mixed-religious sexual encounters would have been major concerns for Leo. It is not clear who these Muslim women were who sought baptism for their children, although it seems likely that they were slaves, despite Michael McCormick’s findings that most slaves were European, male and either children or teenagers. Scholars working on the region focusing on the Muslim context have found indications of Muslim slaves as well, although at various periods there was also a free Muslim population, from which these women also could have come.<sup>175</sup> Photius was

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have defected to the Cilicians and to the Muslims. Also see Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 225–31; Brand, “The Turkish Element in Byzantium,” and discussions above.

**173** Cuffel, “Conversion and Religious Polemic”; Perry, “Daily Life of Slaves,” 201–2, 207; Yagur, “Religious Identity”; 21–26, 28, 46, 51, 91–92, 98, 206, 220–21; Gardette, “The Judaizing Christians”; Rustow, *Heresy and the Politics of Community*, 262–64; Holo, *Byzantine Jewry*; Bowman, *The Jews of Byzantium*, 35–39, 54–55; Gil, *A History of Palestine*, sec. 939, pp. 815–18.

**174** Photius, *Responsa*, PG 102, cols. 773/774–781/782.

**175** Berto, *Christians and Muslims in Early Medieval Italy*, 10–15, 36, 40, 46; McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, 244–65, 769–75; Metcalf, *Muslims of Medieval Italy*, 1–43.

clearly anticipating opposition to his suggestion that such children be granted baptism, for he is careful to allay fears that the one who would agree to administer such a ritual would be responsible if the child grew up to live a less than righteous life. Rather, he suggests, baptism should be a kind of gateway or down payment toward righteousness, and possibly even conversion for both child and mother.<sup>176</sup>

Comparing this letter with later Byzantine texts describing the same phenomenon, Rustam Shukurov argues that there was a change in Byzantine canon law starting in the twelfth century, in which such baptisms were no longer considered valid. The change may be traced to Loukas Chrysoberges, who was patriarch of Constantinople between 1156 to 1170. Some Muslims who had been brought before the synod maintained that they should not have to be baptized because they had already been baptized in their homeland. Some also claimed to have had Orthodox Christian mothers. Nevertheless, they were required to be rebaptized, because they could produce no witnesses that they had undergone the ritual.<sup>177</sup> Theodore Balsamon discusses this issue on two occasions in his commentary on canon law: once when elaborating on canon 84 of the Council of Trullo and once on canon 8 of the seventh Ecumenical Council, otherwise known as the Second Council of Nicea (787 CE).<sup>178</sup> Canon 84 of Trullo states that children who cannot answer for themselves or understand the mystery of baptism and for whom there is no witness that they have been baptized, may be baptized again. After explaining in general why one would need to baptize a child again, he turns specifically to synod, explaining that children from both Christian and Muslim lands had been captured in war. The question arose whether these children should be rebaptized. When some Muslims at the synod claimed that they had already been baptized they were asked how that came to be. They replied that: “it is a custom, all Muslim children are baptized by an orthodox priest.”<sup>179</sup> As in the record of the synod itself, Balsamon also notes that these Muslims’ claim to Christian identity through baptism was rejected not only because there was no witness but also because Muslims sought baptism as a kind of medicine for the body, rather than the soul, an assertion he repeats in his discussion of second council of Nicea, embedded in a lengthy discussion of the problems surrounding baptizing Jews, ascertaining their sincerity, and the problem of their continuing to observe the Sabbath after baptism.<sup>180</sup> In the fourteenth century Matthew Blasteres repeats this information and adds that Muslim children are baptized before circumcision.<sup>181</sup>

Both Charles Brand and Rustam Shukurov understood the phenomenon described in these canon law texts as indicators of how Muslims, specifically Turks, sought to

**176** Photius, *Responsa*, PG 102, cols. 779/780; Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 61.

**177** *Regestes des actes du Patriarchat de Constantinople*, vol. 1, fasc. II–III no.1088; Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 57–60; Shukurov, “Harem Christianity”; Brand, “The Turkish Element in Byzantium.”

**178** Balsamon, PG 137, cols.793/794–797/798, 913/914–915/916.

**179** συνήθειά ἐστι πάντα τὰ νήπια τῶν Ἀγαρηνῶν βαπτίζεσθαι παρὰ ὀρθοδόξων ἱερέων. Balsamon, PG 137, Canon 84, cols. 795/796.

**180** Balsamon, PG 137, Canon 84, cols. 795/796, 915/916.

**181** Blasteres, *Syntagma*, PG 144, cols. 1107/1108.

negotiate both their identity and their entry into Byzantine society. Both Brand and Shukurov maintain that to become part of an advance in Byzantine society required baptism and official Christian status. Shukurov argues that although Muslims were allowed to practice their religion within Byzantine territories, that privilege was reserved for Muslim subjects of foreign rulers, living or staying in Byzantium. Brand suggests that Seljuk identity was sufficiently fluid, and affiliation with Islam recent enough, that adopting a Christian or ambiguous status was not so distressing. Shukurov is inclined to argue that Turks consciously adopted a dual religious identity; which they claimed at any given moment depended on their locale. That many in fact came from mixed marriages aided this strategy.<sup>182</sup> The anxiety evident in Byzantine legal texts sprang from the fear of insincere Muslim converts.<sup>183</sup> This hypothesis is further supported by Balsamon and Blastere's choice to embed their descriptions of Muslim baptism in discussions of Jewish baptism and crypto-Judaism.<sup>184</sup>

While Brand and Shukurov's contentions are convincing and well supported by the sources, the picture which they present is partial at best. Although Shukurov mentions Photius' letter, he does not discuss its implications. Whether these Muslim women had their children baptized under duress (slavery) or freely would be important to know for understanding the context of later descriptions of similar behaviour. If the latter, then this letter provides evidence that the kind of communal bathing or "baptism" at Christian pools by both Muslims and Christians described by not only Byzantine canon lawyers, but also by Syriac canonists, such as Jōḥannān of Mardē, Muslim legalists, like Ibn al-Ḥājj and western travellers, such as Felix Fabri, was a long-standing and wide-spread custom.<sup>185</sup> The fact that Photius seems to be addressing the conflict between Muslims and Christians in Calabria also indicates that this practice was not peculiar to Turkish Muslims. One might argue that the festive bathing which so upset Ibn al-Ḥājj was imported to Egypt by Mamluks, namely slaves, often Turkic, brought to Egypt to serve in the military, but nothing in the passage singles out Mamluks for special opprobrium.

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**182** Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 55–63, 222–23, 229–39, 297; Shukurov, "Harem Christianity"; Brand, "The Turkish Element in Byzantium." Balivet, though he does not address Muslim baptism, also argues that many Turks adopted a kind of dual Christian/Muslim identity; *Romanie Byzantine*, 21–34.

**183** Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 61–62, 228–30, Shukurov suggests this anxiety was exacerbated by the scandal surrounding the purported Christian identity of Seljuk Sultan 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwus II (r. 1246–1262 CE) and his male children. While taking political refuge in Byzantium, the metropolitan of Pisidia, Markarios, confirmed 'Izz al-Dīn's claim that he and his family had been baptized in their homeland, and therefore already good Christians and did not need to convert. Once 'Izz al-Dīn abandoned Byzantium for the Golden Horde, his Christian status was called into question, and the Patriarch Arsenios (ca. 1200–1273 CE) was blamed for having welcomed them and having treated them as Christians with the right to attend church, eat with Christians etc. Shukurov hypothesizes that this accusation that this accusation, among others, was an effort on the part of Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos (1223–1282 CE) to depose Arsenios.

**184** Blasteres follows his discussion about baptizing Muslim infants with a chapter on the Jews. Blasteres, *Syntagma*, PG 144, cols. 1109/1110.

**185** See Chapters 2, 4, and 5 of this book.

Thus, something similar to the practice described in these Byzantine legal texts seems to have been common in Egypt at least by the Mamluk era.<sup>186</sup> While desiring dual identities makes some sense in the context of frequent mixed marriages, and a need to function in both Byzantine-Christian and Seljuk (and later, other Turkic) -Muslim societies, Muslims in Egypt and the Levant would have gained no advantage from claiming Christian identity; indeed, as we have seen, doing so would have been a violation of the ruling religious hierarchy of which they were part. One possibility is that (Syrian) Christian willingness to allow, or even encourage such customs facilitated Muslim participation in baptismal and other Christian rituals throughout Anatolia and parts of the Mediterranean. Although, as we have seen, Jōhannān of Mardē made a clear separation between Muslims partaking in the baptism of St. John vs. Christians being inducted into the faith through the baptism of Christ with sacred oil and water, the Muslims bringing their children to this ceremony may have understood the ritual differently. Or, perfectly cognizant of the ritual's meaning and purpose, they consciously used this custom to claim Christian belonging when it was advantageous to do so.

In the *Penitential* of Dawit' Ganjekec'i is a passage which bears striking resemblance to the twelfth-century Byzantine and Syrian Orthodox rulings about Muslims who had been baptized by Christian priests, although it pre-dates all but the letter of Photius:

Again there is a custom among priests to accept the children of infidels for baptism: such are ignorant of the mysteries of God and do not know that we were baptized in the death of Christ and by baptism are buried with him. But they who are baptized by us in this saving mystery like us are not baptized by conviction but are baptized thinking it to be some devilish witchcraft for the protection of their persons. Therefore, it is not proper to cast the ineffable mystery of the Word before those who mock us with this redeeming sacrament; certain priests devise some imperfect [form of baptism] and merely sprinkle water on their bodies with the object of escaping from supreme and great punishment. We are, however, commanded to confess boldly before heathens; hence let no one do it for it is deception. But if anyone performs the full rite of baptism over them in our fashion, he shall be dismissed from the orders of priesthood and shall not celebrate mass...Above all, it is proper to forbid the status of godfather to the infidels, for what has a believer in common with an unbeliever, or Christ with Belial? If any should do this once in ignorance, he shall greatly repent and the priest shall have mercy on him according to his discretion. If he prove contemptuous and take no heed, he is cursed in life and death. And the priest who performs a baptism with an infidel as godfather shall be dismissed from his orders and not celebrate mass. If he does it once—repentance for one year and then scholars will examine his case.<sup>187</sup>

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**186** On Mamluks and the Mamluk system see Freamon, "The 'Mamluk/Ghulam Phenomenon,'" Ayalon, *Islam and the Abode of War*, 1–21.

**187** [Dawit' Ganjekec'i] *Penitential*, Canon 21.

Dawit', like the later Byzantine authors asserts that the Muslims seek baptism for protection rather than out of a desire to accept Christian belief. However, unlike the Byzantine (or the Muslim) texts describing this practice, onus is on the priest who performs the ritual, rather than on the Muslims requesting the ritual. Indeed, Dawit's position is much closer to the attitude of Photius, whose primary concern was to allay fears that any clergy who baptized Muslim children would be held accountable if they lived an impious life in adulthood. Yet more intriguing is Dawit's description of a kind of two-tiered baptismal ceremony, a partial one performed by priests under threat of punishment, vs. the full ceremony. It strongly resembles the two-tiered baptism of the Syrian Orthodox and Church of the East, however, his description of the motivation of clergy is quite different. While Dawit' disapproves of clergy seeking to save themselves by performing some version of baptism—enough to convince an outsider—he considers those who do the full ceremony on behalf of non-Christians on a regular basis to merit condemnation in this life and the next. That priests would be in fear of their safety lest they enact some semblance of baptism for outsiders requesting it, suggests that this ceremony was considered important and powerful enough that non-Christians, most likely Muslim overlords with the power to enforce such punishment, demanded it. Dawit' writes as if this partial baptism is a known stratagem, requiring legislation, suggesting that this dilemma arose frequently. An echo of this situation may be found in Matthew Blasteres, who writes of priests who are tributaries of Muslims performing the ritual reluctantly (ἀκοντες).<sup>188</sup> It would seem, therefore, that in Anatolia and Armenia, priests, and not just orthodox priests as the Byzantine writers asserted, were sought out to perform this blessing for Muslim children, and were compelled to do so. This element of fear and compulsion is completely absent in the Syriac sources, although the Syrian, Armenian and Byzantine Christians overlapped geographically in a number of regions. In Egypt and the Levant, while Muslims all ages went to holy pools, especially during relevant Christian holidays, some writers do specify that children were brought especially for the benefit that they might derive from it, something which Western Christian authors also confirm, although not always in complimentary terms.<sup>189</sup> In these regions, it does not seem there was any need to force Christian sacral participation, perhaps because religious hierarchies and access to holy sites were better established than in Anatolia. The repeated emphasis on children, and the explicit mention of women as instigators of the ritual in many of the texts from a variety of religious traditions, also suggest that this practice was an expression of women's piety, although linking forms of religious behaviour with women was often a form of polemic in itself.<sup>190</sup>

Byzantinists and scholars of Anatolia have puzzled over the references to bad smell. Shukurov repeats Hasluck's suggestion that Christian assertions that Muslims sought baptism for their children in order to rid them of bad smell derived from Christians'

**188** Blasteres, *Syntagma*, PG 144, cols. 1107/1108.

**189** Ibn Taymiya, *Kitāb iqtidā'*, 227; *Ibn Taimiyya's Struggle*, 222; Felix Fabri, *Evagatorium*, 3:50–51 (fol. 92a); Felix Fabri, *Voyage en Egypte*, 2:464–65; Bertrandon de la Broquière, *Voyage d'outremer*, 90, 115; Cuffel, "Environmental Disasters."

**190** Cuffel, "From Practice to Polemic"; Lutfi, "Manners and Customs."

misunderstanding of Muslim purity laws.<sup>191</sup> I would argue that this is simply polemic on the part of both Western and Byzantine Christian authors. Similar to Felix Fabri and other Western Christian authors who disparaged Muslim “baptism” or custom of going to Christian pools during holidays to bathe, Basamon, repeating the statement of the synod, asserts: “It is imagined by the Muslims the children would be possessed by demons and stink like dogs unless they were baptized like the Christians.”<sup>192</sup> Matthew Blasteres is, if anything, worse, for in addition to repeating the assertion that Muslims seek baptism to rid themselves of bad smell—which is to no avail, since they do not receive real baptism—he punctuates the entire passage with comments about the pollution, diseased bodies, profound impiety, and darkness of the Muslims.<sup>193</sup> As shown in Chapter 1, smell was imbued with theological meaning; foul smell was indicative of wrong belief, an attitude that was shared among most of the religious communities in the Mediterranean, including Byzantines and Western Christians. Impurity and disease were no less markers of “bad” religion.<sup>194</sup> Dawit’ was far from complimentary to the unbelievers who sought, baptism, but his tone was far less vituperative than the Byzantine authors writing from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. I would suggest that Byzantine writers felt far more threatened, as Muslim powers and a variety of those whom the Byzantines considered religious outsiders came to dwell within their borders. Balsamon and Blasteres’s discussions of insincere Jewish converts and falsely baptized Muslims, all claiming Christian identity, much as Armenians and Latins claimed to be the true and rightly practising Christians in contrast to the Byzantines, suggest a fear of hidden or changing affiliations, which, as we have seen, was well founded. Shared rituals, whether real or imagined, epitomized the ambiguity of belonging, that so often undermined political and military alliances in addition to religious allegiance. For Armenians, long accustomed to shifting borders and claims to sovereignty, they drew boundaries in other ways, namely ritualized purity and impurity, a system which potentially functioned both when they were religious/ethnic minorities, and when they possessed political power. Anecdotal indications from Armenian texts from the Safavid and Ottoman eras, however, suggest that attitudes toward shared customs or links with other religions changed, although more research would be necessary to map this process fully. The need for medieval canonists, whether Armenian or Byzantine, to repeat prohibitions again imitating or joining practices of others, and the expressions of outrage or frustration by chroniclers over what they perceived as violated boundaries, suggests that on a day to day level, neat delineations of religious affiliation or practice were ignored when it was more practicable to do so.

**191** Shukurov, “Harem Christianity,” comment on 129. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam*, 1:32–33.

**192** “Δέδοκται γὰρ παρὰ Ἀγαρηνοῖς τὰ τέκνα τούτων δαιμονῶν καὶ κατὰ κύνας ὄζειν εἰ μὴ βαπτίσματος τύχῳσι Χριστιανικοῦ”; Balsamon, PG 137, cols. 795/796. For a list of other Western European Christians who evoke such imagery see Shukurov, “Harem Christianity.”

**193** Blasteres, *Syntagma*, PG 144, cols. 1107/1108–1109/1110.

**194** Taylor, “The Syriac Baptism of St. John”; Harvey, *Scenting Salvation*, 201–220; Resnick, *Marks of Distinction*, 203, 233–44; see Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 73–75, for this phenomenon in Byzantine religious polemic, and more generally, 160–97.

## Conclusions

What should be apparent, whether for medieval Italian lands, Iberia, Armenianate lands, or Byzantium, is that law, anxiety, and imagination often when hand in hand. Imagined, threatening behaviour, or commonalities between those already determined as undesirable, was often an expression of insecurity on the part of those in power. In the case of both Latin and Byzantine canon law, conceptualizations about Jews, either as neighbours or as a symbolic category, sometimes shaped both language and enactments. Misunderstanding or wilful misinterpretation, such as Byzantine views discussions the Armenian *mataḥ*, were part of the imaginative process which allowed canonists, chroniclers, or polemicists to legislate or rail against opponents with neatly predetermined characteristics, rather than uncover and address more complicated pluralities of religious and cultural difference. Shared or imitated rituals, whether invented or practised epitomized messy boundaries and indefinable categories, and thus were targeted as threatening. In the case of assertions of Judaizing between Armenian, Byzantine, and Latin Christians, accusing one another of adopting the practices of a religious other served to *create* or emphasize difference between Christians by linking key rituals to an outsider. Jews and their rituals were the most effective rhetorical choice, because in all Christian traditions, Jews were characterized by their utter rejection of Jesus, and thus symbolically epitomized otherness in a way that Muslims, or even “heretics” could not.

Targeted or not, the prohibitions which the larger umbrella of the church and members of its greater hierarchy wished to impose, were often thwarted by local needs and customs. The clash between regional Iberian authorities’ impulse to include Muslims and Jews in religious festivities, and the desire of Rome to prohibit their participation, is a good example of local practice vs. official policy. Resistance to rhetoric, imposed ceremonies, or identities appears in a variety of ways, whether as counter-narratives like the *Toledot Yeshu*, hidden meanings in Jewish banners at Christian processions, ritual purifications in the wake of unwelcome visitors, or Muslim women or Christian wives of Muslim men choosing and interpreting a ritual of belonging and blessing contrary to the understandings of the men around them. Resistance, much like the rhetoric and laws it worked against, sprang from the need to set the boundaries and uphold the religious identities against perceived encroachments by the religious other, very often in the form of shared or imitated religious practices.



## CONCLUSIONS

IN A RECENT article, Benjamin Kedar returned to his earlier project of categorizing religious encounters at shared sacred sites. In it he laments that there have been few historical studies of shared sacred spaces in the Levant, and even fewer efforts to create a typology of this phenomenon in the medieval period in contrast to the numerous anthropological studies on shared practices and religious sites in the modern era. A selection of these, and his own historical investigations led him to conclude that true sharing, or harmonious encounters rarely, if ever characterized multi-religious encounters at sites, an observation which echoes his earlier articles, although in this case he questions the accuracy of the term shared sites or rituals altogether.<sup>1</sup> He is, of course, correct. Yet thanks to his own research and that of many others in a variety of disciplines, few scholars familiar with the topic and the theoretical work which has been done on pilgrimage and “shared” sites in any era would anticipate harmonious or “egalitarian” convergence. To return to some of the points with which I began this study, shared sites, rituals or holy people, whether living, dead, or imagined, are, intrinsically, phenomena of “difficult difference.” It is/was the *threat* of “egalitarian convergence”, and the implied dissolution of hierarchies and boundaries between communities that prompts or prompted the various rhetorical and legal strategies of using shared sites and holy places to reinforce difference and hierarchy examined in this book. In this light, the older theories of Victor and Edith Turner regarding *communitas* seem naïve. Yet, following them, I would still argue, that pilgrimage does create its own time, space, and rules, and, a situation in which boundaries between those of different religious communities, ethnicities, social status, or genders are challenged precisely because they are brought together in unaccustomed ways that do not fit the quotidian categories established by those in power. The resulting polemical posturing, which this book explores, is an expression of the conflict between what the Turners termed “social structure” and “anti-structure.”<sup>2</sup>

That said, what should now be apparent, is that shared sites, saints, and festivals are not merely about pilgrimage. The patterns of encounter and narrative about sharing and difference from the eleventh to the sixteenth, or even eighteenth centuries in lands surrounding the Mediterranean and in inland territories with deep ties to Mediterranean lands based on cultural, religious, mercantile and martial exchanges are also more complex and culturally specific than those patterns identified through broad anthropological comparisons.

Jews and Christians from Western Europe travelling to the Middle East to sites either or both deemed holy created hierarchies of religious otherness in their presentations of religious plurality at these holy places. Both perceived the presence and participation of members of religious communities outside of their own as an indication of outsiders’

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1 Kedar, “Studying the ‘Shared Sacred Spaces.’” His other earlier articles on this topic include: “Convergences...Saydnaya and the Knights Templar”; “Convergences...Saydnaya.”

2 See the Introduction for a lengthier discussion of these concepts and relevant literature.

recognition of the power of a given author's saint or holy place. Muslim participation was the most emphasized and celebrated in these texts, whereas the presence of Jews or Christians (depending on the writer's religious affiliation) was often ignored or downplayed, even when describing sites, such as Hebron, well known for attracting Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. When European Jewish and Christian authors did include mention of one another, occasionally they did so in a relatively mild or neutral fashion, like Niccolo of Poggibonsi. More often they did so in starkly hierarchical and polemical ways. Felix Fabri is particularly notable in this regard, for while he discusses all non-Christians in very negative ways, as we have shown, Muslims are the least objectionable and most "useful," Jews are powerless and more odious than Muslims, and Samaritans the most contemptible of all. The author of the Jewish travelogue of Petachia of Regensburg is less harsh; Muslims are usually either praiseworthy or "mendable" in the face of chastisement from the Jewish holy dead, whereas Christians oppose Jews and their holy places, and are suitably thwarted. I have argued in Chapter 2 that, for European Christian and Jewish travellers, the religious other needed to remain "other" for it was in that capacity of outsider that their veneration had the most discursive power. Muslims were the most valuable other, because, as a politically puissant opponent to Europe, and rulers of the regions containing the holy sites, their "witness" to a Jewish or Christian saint, ritual or site's truth was the most powerful. This factor, plus the unlikelihood and impracticability of Muslim conversion to either Christianity or Judaism in an Islamicate context precluded conversion as an imagined outcome to shared holy persons or sites.

Muslim travellers, whether from Europe or Islamicate lands, rarely highlighted the presence of Jews or Christians at their holy sites, even at those known to have drawn members from multiple religions. A notable exception to this is al-Harawī, who was writing during the crusades. In general, Jewish and Muslim authors seem to have been more likely to comment upon Christians during the crusades, presumably because Christians were a source of trouble for both. Additionally, Muslim travel writers do depict themselves as going to churches or being present at ritual celebrations of other religious communities, mostly Christian, but the reasons that they give for doing so is markedly different than the motivations attributed to them by Christians and Jews. For these Muslim authors, churches, monasteries, synagogues and non-Muslim celebrations mostly seemed a target of touristic curiosity. When attending the graves of the venerated dead, including those revered by non-Muslims, Muslim authors frequently either cast doubts on Jewish or Christian traditions associated with the holy site, or ignored them altogether. For Muslim travellers, assured as they were of their own power, there was no need to note veneration on the part of the religious other in support of their own religious tradition or holy person. This attitude is strikingly different from what we find in *ṭabaqāt* relating to Sufis. I argue that Sufis sought and needed to augment their individual prestige, in part because Sufism and its adherents were being challenged within some Islamic circles. The "witness" of the religious other helped to boost a Sufi figure's status.

As I demonstrated in Chapter 3, Christians and Jews under Islamic rule both also celebrate the presence of the religious other at their holy sites and festivals. As with their Western counterparts, the religious other, most particularly Muslims, served to enhance

the status of a given religious leader, holy place, or celebration. Unlike European Jews and Christians, they seem to have been more welcoming of one another's veneration, and make a less stark distinction between Muslims and members of the religious other lacking political power. This tendency is slightly stronger for Christians under Islamic rule, than for Jews, who remain mildly hostile.

In hagiographic narratives, whether by Jews, Christians, or Muslims from Western Europe, Byzantine territories, or Islamicate lands, I have shown that the religious other is also often a witness to the truth and power of a given holy person and the religion s/he represents. In such narratives, whether the religious other converts often depends on where the hagiography was written and who was in power. Hagiographies composed by authors of a religious community holding uncontested political dominance in a region, such as the Christians of Northern Europe, or Muslim authors of Sufi biographies in Islamicate lands, regularly portray the religious other as converting to Christianity or Islam respectively. Sometimes this is accomplished through the kindness of a given holy person, at others, the member of the religious other is punished or shamed into submission. Often the level of violence or antagonism evinced toward the religious other is connected to the degree of threat—real or imagined—that the religious other is perceived as posing, or the state of relations between a given religious minority and the group in power. Texts written by authors from the politically dominant religious community but in borderlands, in which that dominance is contested, often waiver between having the religious other convert or portraying them as respecting the saint but retaining their original religious affiliation. Iberia is a good example of such a “borderland.”<sup>3</sup>

Hagiographies, whether as stand-alone collections, or tales embedded in chronicles, travel narratives, or other types of texts, composed by those not in power, do not usually depict the religious other as converting. In this one may see a parallel with the Western European Christian and Jewish pilgrimage accounts of their travels in Islamicate lands, which, indeed, often have mini-hagiographies embedded within them. As in the hagiographies composed by those in a position of power, however, recognition and reverence by a member of the religious other is an occasion of celebration and a demonstration of the truth and power of the “saint” and the religion s/he represents. Similarly, how well-treated the religious other is by a given holy person, living or dead, depends on the state of relations between the community of the author, and that of the religious other featured in the story. One may see this tendency clearly in the portrayal of differences between R. Jacob Goiozo's relatively positive interactions with Muslims and the death and destruction visited upon R. Goiozo's Christian opponent in the Ottoman Jewish chronicle of Joseph Sambari discussed in Chapter 4.<sup>4</sup> An exception to some of these overarching tendencies is the *Miracula Sancti Isidori*. While many of the encounters between

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**3** I have touched upon this tendency in this book, but it is elucidated more clearly in Cuffel, “Henceforward,” although in this case, focusing entirely on Marian miracles.

**4** Most stand-alone Jewish hagiographical collections featuring encounters between Jews and non-Jews seem to come from Ashkenaz and thus have not been featured in this book, however, the patterns described above hold for true for many of these narratives as well. See Drees, *Beyond Violence*; Raspe, *Jüdische Hagiographie*.



of the author. However, the numerous descriptions of certain practices, often by members of different religious communities, indicate that despite multifarious agendas evident in the texts, a real practice is at the core. Hagiographies of the religious other may be classified as a kind of hermeneutical version of shared saint veneration. Late medieval and early modern Iberian processions in which Christians dressed up and played the roles assigned to Jews or Muslims in the past, when there was no longer a Jewish or Muslim community in Iberia to compel, is another example. Accusations of Judaizing between Armenian, Byzantine and Western European Christians is the final example. As I argued in Chapter 6, accusations that the other adopted Jewish practices was a way of creating and affirming difference between Christian communities by using a religious outsider who had come to symbolize the very antipathy of Christian identity.

Opposition to shared saints, festivals and holy sites is perhaps more straightforward, but no less rife with rhetoric, nor less informative about the actual practices. With this observation, let me turn from typologies of the representation of shared practices, to some more concretely historical considerations. Regarding opposition, I repeat the assertion made in the Introduction, that much of the arguments and tone of *bida'* writing by Muslim authors in Egypt and the Levant spring either directly from emigrants from the Maghrib and al-Andalus, or their influence. This connection between the two regions and *bida'* writing in them is potentially significant when analyzing other Muslim territories touched upon in this book, namely Kurdish, Turkic, and Persian polities. Starting with Hasluck's two-volume study of religious practice and sharing in Asia Minor, if not earlier, scholars have long speculated about the relative "tolerance" and extent of shared practices in Asia Minor in contrast to attitudes among Muslims and other religious communities in the Eastern and Western Mediterranean. Various suggestions have included the influence of Bektashi or other Sufi groups, the incomplete Islamicization of the Seljuks or Mongols, the need to be able to move and function readily within both Byzantine and Islamic, extensive marriage between Christian women and Muslim rulers, among others. Within a solely Muslim context, I would tentatively suggest that an additional factor is the substantial influence of Mālikī anti-*bida'* argumentation. Furthermore, we could pose the question differently, why were Muslim legalists in certain parts of the Islamicate world more stringent and disinclined to allow shared religious customs, which had clearly been going on for a long time, than in other parts of the Islamic world? To suggest that what legal school was prevalent in a given region had an impact religious interactions is hardly surprising, especially with the recent work of Mahmood Kooria on the effect of Shāfi'ī law on the cultures and encounters within the Indian Ocean.<sup>5</sup> Ibn Taymiyya himself, blamed the Fatimids for the existence and persistence of what he considered inappropriate practices, which was a polemical stance in itself, as we have seen. Yet, I would suggest that future scholars wishing to investigate shared practices, would do well to consider carefully David Freidenreich's insistence that we need to pay attention to the nuances of difference between legal systems and the communities who produce them. This necessity comes to the fore quite clearly when considering the legal stance of various Eastern Christian communities regard-

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5 Kooria, *Islamic Law in Circulation*.

ing donations by non-Christians to churches, their presence in them, and the “baptism” of non-Christians, specifically Muslims. The range of legislation, as we have seen, goes from welcoming outsiders to participate in Christian ritual, to complete prohibition, and using the willingness to “baptize” Muslims to condemn other Christians. These differences, in addition to potentially telling us something about how each Christian (and Muslim) community viewed one another, themselves, and constructed boundaries between self and other, remind us of point made by Horden, Purcell, and Chantois, discussed in the Introduction to this book, namely that specific cultural, economic, and religious contexts of a given phenomenon or practice are more important for understanding it than its origins, or broad categorization. The differences *between* religious communities, within the general categories of “Christian,” “Jewish,” and “Muslim,” even within a single region, matter. In this particular case, the differences identified in this book in various Christian communities’ willingness to welcome outsiders to join their rituals or enter their holy spaces raises the question whether the differences how and whether shared practices were conducted might lie not entirely with the Muslims, but equally with the Christian communities, who remained the numerical majority in some regions, and a substantive percentage of the population after that.<sup>6</sup> Differing densities of Jewish populations and their relative power relationship, not merely with the community who held ultimate political power, but also relative to other minority communities also deserves consideration, although obtaining this information would be challenging with the current sources. Furthermore, there are populations which are frequently neglected when attempting to analyze interreligious relations in the Mediterranean and connected regions. Samaritans, Zoroastrians, and Karaites have occasionally appeared in this study, yet, a future, deeper investigation into shared or contested religious practices would consider how these communities fit within the network of interreligious interactions, both on their own terms, and in the rhetoric of those who encountered them. Also instructive, would be to examine intra-religious sharing and competition. Christian communities struggled to define themselves relative to one another, and many of the prohibitions against “shared” practices are, in fact, directed at other Christians. The extent to which the same is true in other communities bears further exploration. How any intra-religious sharing or conflict over holy sites played into the kinds of interreligious “sharing” discussed in this book, remains an open question.

Certainly, who held power mattered, both in terms of the lived realities of interactions and, specifically, shared practices, and in the discourses that developed around them. Recognizing multiple powers were or are often at play, and that local politics and culture can and did trump the dominant narrative or legislation regarding shared practices and interreligious relations more broadly would also nuance future examinations of interactions and shared rituals between Jewish, Christian, and/or Muslim communities. A good example of this principle is the disconnect between papal legislation and local practice in late medieval Iberia concerning Jewish and Muslim participation in Christian festivities discussed in Chapter 6.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, see Kurt Werthmuller discussion of population change among Copts in Ayyubid Egypt. Werthmuller, *Coptic Identity and Ayyubid Politics*, 62–66, 75–79.

While much has been said about the conflicting claims of religious superiority in written accounts of shared practices, one may ask: what of those who were observed, but did not write? Is this a study only of religious elites and their frustrations? On the one hand, historians of pre-modern cultures struggle to find ways of uncovering the behaviours and attitudes of those who could not or did not write. Certainly, a study of shared holy sites would benefit from an extensive archaeological exploration, which scholars have done for individual sites. Doing so, would in part reveal something about the practices of those who did not write. However, I would return to the oft-repeated insistence by those working on “popular culture” that popular culture is something shared by all, by definition. The activities of Islamic travel writers is a case and point. They often engaged in behaviours—going to church, for example—about which their colleagues fumed in anti-*bida'* or other prescriptive treatises. This is not to say that social status made no difference. Kedar's call, at the end of his most recent article, to consider these factors is much needed. However, elite sources do hint at what the rest of the population were doing, like the accounts of Muslim and Christian women bringing their children to be baptized. Grehan's suggestion that some practices relating to essential life cycle processes, superseded or existed parallel to confessional religious practices is a convincing one, that would benefit from further study.

Finally, the undertaking to do a study of the Mediterranean, whether or not readers deem it a successful one, shows several things. First, there were a body of shared symbols and attitudes among peoples in the Mediterranean which fed a common, although not identical, understanding of sanctity, ritual, etc., and facilitated shared practices, as evidenced by their evocation in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim text from multiple locales. However, these shared symbols were not confined to the Mediterranean. The movement of people, texts, images, etc., in which the Mediterranean played a large role, created a much larger network than the regions immediately connected to the sea. However, I would argue that the plurality and cross-religious or cross-cultural contact which the Mediterranean enabled, created environments in immediately adjacent lands which forced the inhabitants to address difference, in ways that regions farther inland did not always have to do. Whether or not an individual came from a pluralistic region combined with local cultural, religious, and political factors to substantively affect the description and understanding of “shared” practices. The contested lands of Anatolia and the Caucasus possessed many of the same inter-connected, pluralistic characteristic of the Mediterranean, and parts of it, were, indeed, linked to the Mediterranean. What awaits to be done is not so much a historical examination of shared holy sites and festivals in the medieval Levant, but rather a study of how such practices, and the discourses which accompanied them, were historically entangled throughout the Mediterranean, West and Central Asia, India, and East Africa.



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# INDEX

- Abraham, biblical patriarch, 28n49, 137, 143, 168, 229
- Abraham b. Maimon, 45, 130, 170, 171, 172, 189, 190
- Abū l-Fatūḥ 121, 122, 124
- adhān*. *See* call to prayer
- Africa. *See* North Africa
- Alfonso X, king, 70, 77n11, 100, 101n93
- Almohads, 49, 157, 161
- altars 81, 111, 112, 125, 144, 145
- al-Andalus 1, 5, 6n21, 7, 11, 41, 44n143, 49, 110, 157, 158, 159, 160, 163, 165 166, 167, 170, 176, 190, 247.  
*See also* Iberia; Portugal; Spain
- animals 44, 47, 119n43, 134, 163, 192, 219, 225, 226, 228, 229, 230, 231
- apostasy 70, 172, 173, 179.  
*See also* conversion
- apostles, 24, 90, 149, 230
- Arabs, 31, 68, 114, 222  
Arabic 4, 27, 73, 110, 111, 153, 162, 163n28, 169, 171, 184, 226, 231
- Armenia and Armenian 11, 30, 56n29, 73, 110, 113, 115n24, 191, 192, 193, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232n167, 233, 234, 235, 239, 240, 247
- asceticism 20n5, 21n9, 135, 170.  
*See also* fasting
- attacks against Jews 101, 102, 105, 106.  
*See also* violence
- Augustine of Hippo, saint, 37, 38, 39
- Avila. *See* Synod of Avila
- Aylazgi*, 230, 231, 232
- al-'Azafī, 158, 164, 169, 185, 189
- al-Badawi, Aḥmad, 5, 142, 151
- banners 86, 88, 91, 92, 96, 97, 108, 241
- baptism 56, 57, 69n76, 79, 180n103, 205, 219, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 248  
of John 114, 115, 238  
of Muslim children 193, 235, 236
- Bari, 79, 80, 82, 83
- bathing, 55, 68, 69, 135, 163, 168, 179, 180, 190, 193, 227, 234, 237, 240
- beauty, 11, 56, 58, 64, 133, 138, 139, 141, 142, 151, 175n81, 184
- Bertrandon de la Broquière, 52n10, 60, 61, 69n76
- Bible  
Christian, 51, 96, 97
- bida'* 1, 5, 11, 15, 157, 158, 159, 164, 165, 167, 171, 176, 177, 178, 181n108, 182, 184, 186, 187, 188, 189, 191, 228, 247, 249. *See also* innovation
- blessing, 23, 31, 37, 39, 45, 79, 90, 95, 109, 114, 123, 128, 132, 133, 150, 154, 178, 184, 186, 187, 188, 189, 207, 210, 239, 241
- blood, 22, 24n22, 215, 216, 225
- body, 21, 22, 23, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 44, 48, 63, 78, 100, 154, 180, 209, 228, 236. *See also* corpses
- boundaries, 7, 53, 109, 189, 240, 241  
religious, 2, 3, 17, 19, 20, 25, 43, 48, 50, 59, 68, 113, 118, 168, 169, 197, 203, 206, 217, 229, 241, 243, 248
- Byzantine, Byzantium, and Byzantine Church, 8, 10, 11, 17n63, 26, 38, 40, 47, 49n2, 64, 73, 74, 75, 76, 79, 80, 86, 110, 113, 117, 126, 127, 135, 141, 143, 146, 151, 191, 192, 193, 195, 218, 219, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 245, 247
- Cairo, 14, 41, 131, 140n121, 141.  
*See also* Egypt
- call to prayer/*adhān*, 197, 207, 208
- candles, 27, 28, 54, 59, 129, 181.  
*See also* lamps
- Canon law  
Armenian, 223, 228, 234  
Law Code of Mxit'ar Goš 222, 223, 224  
Penitential of Dawit' Ganjekec'i, 223, 226, 230, 232, 238  
Byzantine, 225, 234, 235, 236, 237, 241  
Latin, 5, 6, 86, 101, 118, 194, 196, 197, 223, 241
- caves, 23, 65, 79, 173

- ceremonies, 2, 9, 11, 55, 62, 75, 93, 94, 97, 107, 117, 118, 132, 141, 176, 184, 186, 187, 188, 205, 210, 241, 246
- celebrations, 1, 2, 11, 14, 30, 49, 50, 51, 75, 76, 85, 86, 87, 88, 92, 97, 98, 99, 101, 102, 104, 107, 117, 119, 120, 122, 123, 124, 139, 140n121, 142n133, 154, 157, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 176, 180, 185, 189, 190, 194, 202, 203, 204, 206, 208, 209, 210, 211, 214, 216, 217, 217, 244, 245, 246. *See also* festivals
- charity, 109, 110, 113, 114, 116n28, 117, 121, 124, 138, 143, 166n39, 172, 198, 202. *See also* donations
- children, 24n25, 27, 56, 69n76, 73, 74, 78, 101, 114, 116, 131, 143, 164, 165, 169, 181, 190, 193, 200, 203, 205, 213, 218, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 249. *See also* food; gifts; play
- Christmas, festival, 98, 140, 142, 164, 181, 185, 202
- churches, 3, 4, 11, 29, 58, 60, 70, 73, 80, 90, 98, 103, 120, 123, 124, 133, 139, 150, 151, 152, 154, 165, 169, 174, 183, 184, 185, 186, 193, 210, 227, 229, 232, 233  
Muslim religious activities in, 55, 56, 62, 109, 110, 111, 121, 122, 141, 142, 144, 146, 185, 188, 189, 206, 208, 231, 244
- Church of the East, 35, 110, 114, 239
- chronicles, 1, 4, 8, 9, 49, 91, 111, 121, 122, 130, 132, 137, 140, 153, 159, 169, 223, 244
- Cilicia, 220, 222, 230
- circumcision, 122, 143, 198n31, 224, 236
- clothing, 1, 37, 110, 120, 163, 180, 181, 233. *See also* dress
- Communitas*, 3, 71, 72, 243
- competition, 4, 7, 28, 64, 118, 132, 133, 145, 147, 153, 154, 168, 207, 208, 211, 246, 248
- Constantinople, 8, 60, 64, 126, 141, 219, 232, 233
- convergence, 43, 51, 72, 107, 128, 145, 243
- conversion, 3, 9, 56, 70, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 115, 116, 121, 130, 135, 137, 138, 161, 166, 170, 173, 188, 190, 194, 196, 197, 199, 200, 202, 207, 232n167, 236, 244, 246. *See also* apostasy; prohibitions
- Copts and Coptic, 4, 5, 10, 18, 49n2, 110, 113, 121, 122, 125, 126, 139, 140, 159, 160, 169, 174, 179, 184, 188
- corpses, 15, 21, 22n14, 23, 24, 25, 33, 34, 36n95, 38, 39n115, 48. *See also* body
- Corpus Christi, festival, 2, 85, 87, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 107, 209, 218. *See also* festivals; processions
- Council of Trullo, 225n139, 227, 228, 236
- Crusades, Crusaders, and crusading, 4, 6, 49, 60, 61, 63, 64, 66, 125, 126, 128, 133, 152, 155, 160, 161n14, 196, 222, 244
- curiosity, 8, 11, 133, 138, 141, 144, 146, 164, 184, 185, 231, 244
- customs, 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 14, 20, 25, 26, 30, 31, 32, 40, 41, 42, 49, 51, 54, 69n76, 71, 84, 86, 89, 92, 94, 95, 101, 103, 106, 112, 117, 119, 132, 143, 157, 158, 162, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 170, 176, 178, 180, 181, 182, 188, 190, 191, 197, 198, 201, 202, 203, 206, 207, 210, 212, 213, 216, 217, 220, 223, 228, 229, 234, 236, 237, 238, 240, 241, 243, 247
- Damascus, 31, 51, 139, 141, 149, 151, 152  
dance and dancing 90, 91, 92, 99, 100, 101, 102, 106, 174, 209, 210, 211
- darkness, 25, 26, 27, 240
- Dawit' Ganjekec'i, 223, 226, 230, 231, 232, 238, 239, 240
- death, 23, 25, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39n115, 43, 48, 66, 75, 76, 84, 127, 187, 203, 207  
holy dead, 11, 20, 24, 26, 27, 28n51, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 45, 47, 48, 50, 54, 59, 63, 66, 67, 75, 90, 124, 125, 130, 132, 133, 146, 148, 152, 162, 176, 178, 189, 244. *See also* special dead; saints
- decay, 21, 22, 25
- decomposition 23, 24, 146. *See also* decay.
- demons and devils, 29, 32, 79, 191, 207, 214. *See also* Satans
- Dhimmis*, 6n20, 41, 49, 58, 86, 89, 109, 110, 119, 120, 122n52, 132, 134, 135, 136, 138, 148, 152, 154, 155, 158, 159, 160, 161n14, 162, 163, 166, 167, 168, 174, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 188, 189, 199

- difficult difference, 3, 48, 243
- donations, 11, 75, 98, 99, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 115, 118, 119, 138, 188, 217, 226, 231, 246
- drama, 98, 102, 103, 104, 191, 214, 216
- dress, 6n20, 43, 101, 118, 120, 130, 210, 247. *See also* clothing
- Easter, festival, 28, 50, 99, 101, 103, 104n107, 105, 106, 140n121, 192, 210, 212, 213, 214, 216, 218, 228
- Echevarria, Ana, 6, 197, 204
- egalitarian/inegalitarian convergence or sharing, 51, 72, 128, 139, 147, 243
- Egypt, 1, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 30, 41, 45, 49, 52, 68, 69, 84, 117, 118, 127, 130n82, 132, 135, 140n121, 151, 154, 158, 159, 160, 169, 170, 172, 176, 178, 180, 181, 186, 193, 214, 220, 237, 238, 239, 247. *See also* Cairo
- Elijah, prophet, 51n8, 97, 144, 145, 173. *See also* al-Khidr
- entertainers, 100, 109, 205
- entries, 84n91, 86, 87, 88, 89, 91, 92, 95, 97. *See also* processions
- Epiphany, festival, 51, 115, 119, 140, 180n103, 190. *See also* 'id al-Ghitās
- Eucharist, 187, 188, 190, 206, 218, 219, 228, 229. *See also* flatbread
- Exempla*, 76, 77, 81, 137
- expulsion, 6n21, 9, 49, 162
- Ezekiel, prophet  
grave of 53, 58n34, 146
- fasting, 40, 41, 50, 57, 168, 170, 174, 181, 182n117
- Fāṭima, daughter of the Prophet  
Muḥammad, 22n16, 160, 177
- Fātimids, 5, 36, 109, 120, 140, 143, 159, 160, 173n70, 178, 247. *See also* Shi'ī
- Felix Fabri, 52n10, 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 63, 68, 69, 71, 148, 237, 240, 244
- festivals and festivity 1, 2, 3, 4, 5n17, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 30, 33, 48, 50, 51, 53, 54, 62, 63, 65, 67, 72, 75, 85n41, 86, 87, 88, 90, 92n66, 93, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 106, 107, 118, 119, 120, 122, 123, 125, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 154, 155, 157, 159, 162, 164, 165, 166, 168, 169, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 194, 197, 202, 206, 210, 211, 212, 217, 229, 237, 241, 244, 247, 248, 249. *See also* individual festivals
- fire, 27, 28, 34, 65, 66, 165, 181
- flatbread, 184, 185, 187, 227, 228, 229. *See also* Eucharist
- food, 1, 109, 110, 114, 115, 117, 118, 123, 135n105, 143, 163, 165, 166, 168, 169, 174, 180, 181, 184, 186, 200, 201, 210, 211, 217, 219, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 234
- forced sharing, 2, 85, 101, 102, 194, 208, 209, 210, 211, 213, 214, 218, 233, 246
- fragrance, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 48. *See also* smell
- France, 6n20, 7, 59, 62, 80, 81, 202
- François Savary de Breves, 62, 63, 149
- Frankfurter, David, 12, 16, 32, 190
- funerals, 73, 137, 138, 176n89, 205
- games, 75, 92, 99, 100, 101, 103, 106, 169, 173, 174, 181, 210, 214, 216
- Garsoïan, Nina, 220, 223, 224
- Geniza, 8, 9, 117, 129, 172, 217, 220
- Gentiles, 65, 66, 79, 116, 117n32, 217
- gifts, 55, 58, 59, 60, 98, 111, 113, 117, 123, 139, 143, 149, 164, 165, 166, 174, 180, 181, 195, 201, 202, 203, 217, 227. *See also* donations; offerings
- graves and gravesites 7n29, 10, 11, 14, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 52, 53, 54, 55, 58, 59, 60, 65, 66, 67, 71, 79, 128, 129, 130, 140, 142, 146, 157, 176, 177, 178, 189, 205, 207, 208, 244. *See also* shrines
- Greek 4, 32, 43, 62, 69n76, 114, 124, 224
- Gregory of Tours, historian, 86, 89, 90
- Goyim*, 64, 129, 130
- Guntram, king, 86, 89, 90
- ḥadīth*, 24, 35, 164, 167, 178, 187
- hagiography, 8, 10, 27, 49, 73, 75, 126, 130, 137, 153, 155, 208, 218, 245, 246, 247
- al-Harawī, 141, 145, 146, 147, 148, 155, 244
- Hebron, 14, 40, 41, 52, 68, 110, 128, 142, 143, 144, 244
- heretics, 74, 75, 76, 111, 126, 192, 223, 228, 230, 231, 232, 241

- hermeneutical Judaism 74, 192, 220, 246, 247. *See also* judaizing
- hierarchy, 6n21, 10, 11, 14, 53, 56, 57, 59, 60, 65, 66, 67, 68, 71, 72, 75, 78, 85, 88, 97, 106, 107, 109, 112, 119, 132, 133, 147, 150, 152, 155, 163, 180, 181, 196, 214, 221, 230, 238, 241
- ḥisba*, 5, 158, 164, 166, 175
- History of the Patriarchs*, 121, 125, 126, 174
- Holy Land 7, 60, 66. *See also* Palestine; Israel
- Holy Sepulchre, 28, 54, 148
- Holy Week, 99, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 194, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 217, 218
- holy persons, 27, 28, 35, 37, 51, 54, 59, 67, 71, 76, 78, 97, 103, 120, 131, 132, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 149, 153, 176, 244, 245. *See also* saints; special dead; Sufi; *zadiq*
- homosexuality. *See* same-sex love
- horses, 61, 90, 93, 119, 123, 139
- host, 92, 100, 103. *See also* Eucharist
- humiliation, 11, 61, 63, 88, 89, 103, 148, 179
- Hungary, 194, 199, 202
- Iberia. 6n21, 7, 9, 10, 41, 45, 47, 49, 59, 71, 76, 77, 79, 92n66, 94, 99, 100, 101, 102n96, 103, 104, 107, 148, 151, 158, 161, 162, 165, 175, 188, 194, 197, 198, 200n42, 204, 205n60, 208, 210, 211, 213n94, 214, 217, 241, 245, 246, 247, 248. *See also* al-Andalus; Spain
- Ibn 'Abdūn 157, 163, 164, 165
- Ibn al-Ḥājj, 5, 28n49, 158, 174, 179, 180, 182, 237
- Ibn Jubayr, 141, 142, 150, 151, 152, 155
- Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya 45, 46, 47, 182
- Ibn Sa'īd, Yahyā, 118, 119, 120
- Ibn Taymiyya, 1, 3, 5, 31, 176, 178, 179, 180n103, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 247
- icons, 74, 80n24, 144
- īd al-Ghitās*, 114, 119, 140, 190.  
*See also* Epiphany
- īd al-zaytūnah*, 179, 180, 190.  
*See also* Palm Sunday
- idols 29, 30, 34, 45, 46, 127, 128
- illness, 19, 56, 63, 73, 113, 226n141.  
*See also* sickness
- imitation, 41, 158, 159n8, 169, 172, 181, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 234
- impurity. *See* purity
- incense, 21, 24, 26, 41, 125
- inclusion, 81, 92, 97, 103, 106, 118, 140, 141, 195
- infidels, 150, 207, 209, 226, 231, 238.  
*See also* unbelievers
- Innocent III, pope, 196, 213, 214
- innovation, 1, 11, 15, 20n49, 158, 159, 170, 185, 190. *See also* *bida'*
- intercession, 7n28, 8, 15, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 46, 107, 136, 157, 176, 177, 205. *See also* prayer
- Ishmaelites, 53, 54, 59, 66, 207, 219
- Isidore of Seville, saint, 10, 76, 77, 78, 79, 107, 207, 208
- Islamic law, 14, 63, 110, 122, 160, 175, 199  
in Iberian under Christian rule  
Mālikī law, 1, 5, 110, 207, 247
- Israel, 30n60, 94, 116, 129, 130, 200.  
*See also* Levant; Holy Land
- Jacob ha-Cohen, 65, 66, 67, 68, 133
- Jacobs, Martin, 52, 64, 128
- Jacobus de Voragine, saint, 81, 82, 83, 84
- al-Jarsifi, 'Umar, 158, 163, 165, 166
- Jerusalem, 34, 49, 56, 63, 66, 89, 128, 142, 143, 157, 189n138. *See also* Holy Land; Holy Sepulchre; Israel; Levant
- Jesus, 21, 24, 26, 39n115, 42, 50, 51, 53, 55, 56, 66, 67, 69, 74, 78, 89, 93, 100, 102, 103, 104, 106, 107, 133, 138, 145, 148, 149, 169n48, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 215, 216, 224, 228, 241
- Jewish Law, 7, 92, 199, 200, 201, 217, 226n141, 234n170, 235
- Jōḥannān of Mardē, 114, 237, 238
- John the Baptist, saint, 30, 53, 55, 115, 169n48
- John the Evangelist, saint, 30, 38n111, 53, 55, 114, 115, 165, 169n48, 238
- Joshua, prophet  
grave of, 53, 54, 146
- judaizing, 192, 193, 218, 223, 224, 226, 229, 234, 241, 247

- Kabbalah, Lurianic, 9, 45, 47  
 al-Kāmil, Sultan, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125  
 Kedar, Benjamin, 43, 51, 72, 128, 243  
 al-Khidr, 51n8, 144, 151. *See also* Elijah
- lamps, 26, 27, 28, 46, 54, 128  
 Leo Africanus, 162, 165, 166, 167, 168, 176n89  
 Levant, 1, 5, 11, 49, 68, 69, 118, 127, 153, 158, 159, 169, 178, 181, 193, 238, 239, 243. *See also* Holy Land; Israel; Palestine; Syria  
 light, 20, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 46, 47, 54, 70, 74, 186  
 Linder, Amnon, 89, 92, 96, 97  
 liturgy, 19, 66, 85, 89, 102, 170, 171, 184, 203, 216
- Maghrib 1, 5, 51, 110, 157, 158, 160, 162, 163, 165, 166, 169, 183, 188, 190, 247. *See also* North Africa  
 Magian, 137, 159, 177, 229n152. *See also* Zoroastrianism.  
 Maimonides, 7, 41, 46, 115, 116, 117, 118, 198. *See also* Moses b. Maimon  
 al-Majrīṭī, 44, 45, 47  
 Mālikī, 1, 5, 110, 247  
 Mamluks, 8, 36, 107, 114, 118, 121, 132, 134, 135, 137, 139, 140, 152, 154, 160, 161n14, 170, 173, 178, 186, 237, 238  
 al-Maqrīzī, 140, 172, 173, 176  
 Maronites, 62, 111, 113n14  
 marriage, 109, 118, 162, 232, 234, 247  
 Mary the Virgin. *See* Virgin Mary  
 Matthew Blasteres, 236, 237n184, 239, 240  
*Mawlid*, 5n17, 51, 164, 169, 175n85, 185  
 Mecca, 37, 142, 143, 157, 173  
 merchants, 80, 81, 82, 83  
 Meshullam of Volterra, 54, 57, 63, 146n152, 183n121  
 miracles, 24, 38, 41, 42, 57, 59, 62, 67, 68, 70, 73, 74, 76, 77, 78, 80, 81, 126, 127, 134, 135, 137, 139, 143, 147, 173, 186, 206, 213, 245n3  
*Miracula Sancti Isidori*, 76, 77, 78, 84, 206, 207, 208, 245  
*Mishnah Torah*, 7, 115, 116, 118, 176, 198  
 mixing, 9, 11, 13, 53, 69n76, 81, 85, 98, 109, 110, 125, 144n142, 147n154, 151, 153, 157, 158, 163, 169, 170, 173, 174, 175, 179, 180, 188, 189, 191, 202, 223, 232, 234, 235, 237, 238  
 Mxit'ar Goš, 222, 223, 224  
 mocking of Christian rituals, 2, 81, 124, 191, 194, 213, 214, 216, 218  
 monasteries, 11, 27, 103, 110, 111, 113, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 139, 141, 142, 149, 154, 175, 183, 185, 231, 232, 233, 244  
 Mongols, 5, 110, 113, 222, 247  
 monks, 66, 67, 113, 120, 122, 123, 124, 141, 149, 184, 186, 187  
 Moses, prophet, 68, 69, 93, 138, 173, 176  
 Moses b. Maimon, 6, 114, 158, 170, 176. *See also* Maimonides  
 mosques, 3, 4, 28, 31, 46, 61, 110, 144, 146, 147, 148, 150, 151, 152, 167, 179, 194, 219  
 Muḥammad, prophet, 20n5, 24, 135, 160, 162, 164, 174, 180, 221, 221  
 music and musicians, 87, 92n66, 93, 100, 101, 102, 106, 174, 210, 211
- Nawrūz / Nayrūz, 139, 140, 174, 180  
 Niccolo of Poggibonsi, 52, 54, 68, 244  
 Nicholas, saint, 10, 74, 76, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84  
 Nile, 30, 154, 180. *See also* Nawrūz / Nayrūz  
 Nirenberg, David, 49n2, 101, 104, 106  
 North Africa, 11, 15, 28, 31, 43, 62, 158, 159, 162, 164, 167, 198, 201. *See also* Maghrib
- offerings, 32, 33, 34, 98, 112, 139. *See also* donations; gifts  
 oil, 28n49, 54, 55, 111, 114, 121, 144
- pagans, 16, 31, 33, 47, 68, 79, 80, 111n6, 112, 113, 114, 124, 126, 169, 187, 190, 195, 223  
 pageants, 92, 100, 102, 104  
 Palm Sunday, festival, 51, 118, 120, 179. *See also* 'id al-zaytūnah

- patriarchs, 28n49, 40, 52, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 132, 142, 161n14, 225, 229, 235, 236
- Persians, 36, 112, 138, 139, 142, 180, 247
- Petachia of Regensburg, 25, 27, 53, 58, 59, 63, 64, 124, 130, 244
- Photius, patriarch of Constantinople, 235, 237, 238, 239
- piety, 7, 24, 69, 124, 131, 132, 140, 141, 142, 143, 239
- pilgrimage, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 14, 28n49, 39, 40, 45, 46, 47, 49, 53, 55, 61, 62, 63, 65, 68, 70, 71, 72, 76, 84, 90, 127, 131n85, 141n127, 142, 143, 144, 146, 147, 148, 153, 154, 157, 173, 176, 181, 207, 208, 243, 245
- pilgrimage guides/narratives, 10, 133, 135
- See also ziyāra*
- play, 1, 103, 165, 173, 206
- Pogossian, Zaroui, 74n6, 220n117, 222, 230n158
- polemics, 2, 4, 15, 25, 26, 39n115, 42, 47, 49, 50, 52, 53n16, 68, 74, 77, 83, 84, 89, 110n1, 121, 122, 132, 133, 145, 148, 153, 155, 160n11, 163n28, 191, 192, 213, 216, 217, 218, 219, 221, 223, 224, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 234, 239, 240, 241, 243, 244, 247
- pollution, 22, 33, 240. *See also* impurity
- pools, 69, 180, 193, 237, 239, 240
- poor, 60, 91, 113, 117, 131, 143, 199, 201, 202, 228
- popular religion, 12, 13, 14, 16
- power, 1, 2, 3, 6n21, 10, 12, 22, 32, 39, 48, 50, 52, 53, 56, 57, 58, 61, 63, 66, 67, 69, 70, 71, 72, 74, 75, 77, 78, 79, 81, 84, 88, 90, 92, 93, 96, 97, 99, 101, 106, 108, 109, 110, 114, 118, 120, 121, 122, 124, 125, 127, 128, 130, 134, 135, 137, 138, 148, 149, 150, 152, 155, 160, 178, 184, 190, 208, 223, 235, 239, 240, 241, 243, 244, 245, 246, 248
- prayer, 1, 9, 20, 30, 34, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41n125, 42, 46, 54, 61, 64, 65, 89, 129, 130, 136, 137, 150, 164, 166, 167n40, 169, 171, 172, 174n76, 176n90, 177, 186, 197, 207, 208, 230
- privileges, 75, 91n61, 106, 123, 237
- processions, 10, 11, 56, 74, 75, 86, 88, 90, 92n66, 94, 96, 97, 100, 102, 103, 104, 106, 107, 119, 120, 122, 124, 125, 132, 152, 154, 176n89, 207, 208, 210, 211, 232, 246, 247
- Corpus Christi, 2, 85, 87n49, 99, 100, 107, 208
- royal, 8, 85, 89, 91, 93, 94, 98
- prohibitions, 6n20, 30, 99, 101, 102, 105, 110, 118, 119, 120, 140n121, 166, 167, 174, 191, 192, 194, 198, 199, 203, 204, 205, 221, 226, 227, 232, 234, 235, 240, 241, 248
- against Jews or Muslims entering churches, 193, 206, 208, 230
- prophecy, 44, 94, 126, 172
- prophets, 9, 27, 28, 31, 41, 44, 45, 50, 51, 53, 54, 58, 95, 102, 108, 126, 127, 128, 147, 177, 178, 181
- Provence, 66, 67, 95, 202, 215
- punishment, 10, 34, 35, 38, 44, 59n38, 62, 63, 76, 77, 81, 84, 95, 109, 118, 127, 128n72, 134, 187, 199, 208, 209, 214, 216, 238, 239, 246
- Purim*, 97, 195, 201, 202, 203, 211, 214
- purity and impurity, 15, 20, 33, 34, 36n95, 110n1, 111, 193, 225, 226, 227, 230, 235, 240
- Rabbanite Judaism, 63, 172, 190
- Ramadan, 166, 167, 168, 229
- Rashi (Shlomo b. Yitzḥaq of Troyes), 200, 201, 202n45, 217
- relics, 22, 38, 39, 47, 79, 80, 82, 83, 113, 114, 115, 153
- religious outsiders, 11, 68, 80, 84, 109, 110, 115, 128, 214, 226, 231, 240, 247
- responsa*, 7, 171, 191, 200, 201, 234
- ritual violence, 11, 85, 104, 106, 194, 214, 218. *See also* stoning
- Sabbath, 182, 183, 203, 216, 236
- sacred space, 4, 58, 121, 148, 189, 231, 233, 243
- saints
- compulsory, forced, or unwilling
- veneration of, 10, 57, 59, 67, 70, 71, 76, 78, 90, 132, 245

- punishment by, 10, 53, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67, 73, 76, 81, 109, 113, 127, 147, 148, 149, 207, 208  
*See also* holy persons; special dead; Sufi; *walī zādiq*
- Samaritans, 63, 64, 69, 223, 224n131, 244, 248
- Sambari, Joseph b. Isaac, 132, 133, 245
- same-sex love, 163n28, 174, 175
- Sanders, Paula, 120, 140, 143
- Saracens, 53, 55, 56, 73, 74, 78, 87, 104, 105, 196, 207, 223
- Satans, 182, 185, 187. *See also* demons
- Saydnaya 51, 60n44, 144, 145
- sea and seafaring, 18, 80, 185, 249
- Seljuks, 222, 237, 238, 247
- sepulchres, 28, 54, 56, 59, 148.  
*See also* graves
- servants, 116, 130, 194, 198, 199, 200, 201, 217  
 Christian, 191, 194, 198, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 217  
*See also* prohibitions
- sex and sexuality, 49n2, 63, 161, 163, 164, 168, 169, 175, 176, 179, 182n113, 232n167, 235
- Shaykh*, 9, 131, 132, 134, 135, 136, 138
- Shi'i, 5, 24, 140, 160n11, 170n55, 178, 182, 183. *See also* Fāṭimids
- Shoham-Steiner, Ephraim, 42, 77, 107
- Shrines, 14, 29, 42, 50, 51, 53, 60, 61, 63, 77, 79, 128, 129, 144, 145, 147, 148, 175n85, 177
- Shukurov, Rustam, 236, 237, 239
- sick, 66, 113, 117, 149
- sickness 22, 65, 79, 100, 127.  
*See also* illness
- Siete Partidas*, 100, 101, 213
- singing, 86, 91, 165, 167
- smell: 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 48, 69, 225, 239, 240  
 as marker of false religion, 68, 69, 240  
*See also* fragrance; stench
- socialization, 109, 115, 116, 117, 162, 189, 192, 193, 194, 196, 197, 203, 204, 205, 226, 227, 228, 234, 235
- songs, 88, 91, 165, 208
- souls, 23, 26, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 132, 141, 215, 236
- space. *See* sacred space
- Spain 9, 42, 49, 78, 162, 207.  
*See also* al-Andalus; Iberia
- special dead 7, 9, 12, 48, 49, 127, 205.  
*See also* holy persons; saints; *zādiq*
- spectacles, 99, 100, 102, 168, 174
- spirits, 34, 35, 41n124, 44, 45, 46, 78, 93.  
*See also* soul
- stench, 25, 36, 37, 69. *See also* smell
- Stephen, saint, 90, 91, 99
- stones, 20, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 58, 65, 66, 212  
 stoning, 102, 106, 216. *See also* ritual violence.
- strangers, 113, 143, 230, 232.  
*See also* religious outsider
- Sufism 5, 8, 10, 25, 45, 109, 131, 134, 135, 137, 138, 154, 155, 166, 170, 171, 172, 175n81, 190, 244, 247  
 Jewish, 130, 131, 170, 189  
*See also* holy persons; saints
- Sultans, 58, 59, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 130, 138, 139, 161n14, 171, 186, 187, 188, 233
- Sunday, festival, 51, 56, 119, 120, 169, 179, 190, 204
- Sunnis, 5, 36n95, 86, 110, 140, 159, 160n11, 178, 183, 193, 222
- Suriano, 56, 59, 60, 61, 63, 70, 71, 148
- symbols, 1, 10, 12, 13, 20, 26, 48, 51, 58, 74, 119, 124, 128, 229
- synagogues, 3, 58, 68, 91, 93, 104, 105, 106, 117, 129, 131, 140, 142, 144, 152, 154, 167, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 179, 183, 184, 185, 186, 188, 189, 194, 195, 203, 204, 212, 234, 244
- Synod of Avila, 206, 208, 211
- Synodicon of the West Syrian Church*, 111, 112, 114
- Syria, 16, 143, 170, 178, 183, 188, 190  
 Syriac, 4, 10, 21, 34, 73, 110, 111, 115n25, 153, 184, 223, 224, 226, 230, 231, 234n170, 237, 239  
 Syrian Orthodox church, 35, 110, 112, 113, 114, 115, 238, 239  
*See also* Levant; Damascus

- Talmud, 7, 21, 30, 33, 34, 37, 40, 41, 63n54, 198, 200, 212, 213, 218
- taxation, 6n20, 98, 148
- Theodore Balsamon, 225, 227, 228, 232, 236, 237, 240
- Toledot Yeshu*, 39n115, 133, 213, 214, 218, 241
- Torah, 26, 34, 90, 91, 92, 94, 95, 96, 97, 104, 105, 115, 146, 185
- trees, 16, 20, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 48, 54, 59
- tricks and trickery, 52, 81, 134
- Trullo. *See* Council of Trullo
- Turks, 68, 222, 236, 237
- al-Turkumānī, Idrīs ibn Baidakīn 118, 181, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189
- al-Ṭurṭūshī, Abū Bakr, 5, 158, 167, 168, 169, 174, 229
- al-'Umarī, Ibn Faḍl Allāh, 141, 144, 154
- unbelievers, 11, 53, 74, 77, 109, 126, 137, 138, 150, 168, 181, 238, 240.  
*See also* infidels
- vengeance, 65, 105, 127, 148, 149, 152, 216
- violence, 2, 10, 11, 66n67, 74, 75, 85, 87n49, 99, 102, 103, 103n194, 104, 105, 106, 125, 134, 160, 161, 191, 194, 212, 213, 214, 216, 217, 218, 230, 231, 245, 246. *See also* ritual violence
- Virgin Mary, 59, 70, 71, 73, 77, 80  
Muslim veneration of, 53, 54, 55, 78
- water, 20, 21, 29, 30, 32, 45, 56, 57, 114, 128, 129, 136, 144, 165, 174, 179, 180, 228, 230, 238. *See also* play
- wine, 32, 74, 115, 116, 117, 117n32, 170, 200, 219, 226, 228. *See also* Eucharist
- witnesses, 50, 74, 75, 79, 90, 94, 96, 103, 118, 120, 125, 126, 172, 236, 244, 245
- women, 10, 15, 22n16, 27, 41n125, 70, 71, 91, 116n28, 117, 135, 136, 137, 141, 164, 166, 167, 168, 170, 174, 175, 176, 179, 180, 181, 182, 189, 193, 203, 205, 235, 237, 239, 241, 247, 249  
Muslim women bathing with non-Muslim women, 163, 168, 180
- Yom Kippur*, 66, 182, 229
- young people, 165, 174, 175
- ẓadiq*, 54, 58, 59, 67, 71, 129. *See also* holy persons; Rabbanite; saints
- ziyāra / ziyārāt*, 14, 31, 37, 41, 45, 46, 47, 140, 146, 162, 166, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 182, 184, 185, 205, 208.  
*See also* pilgrimage
- Zohar*, 41, 42, 46, 47
- Zoroastrianism, 36n95, 111, 113, 135, 137, 138, 158, 177, 178, 179, 183, 229n152, 232n166, 234, 248