

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 *dhimmis*, and include them within a *waqf*, so long as the *waqf* was not a non-Muslim religious building or institution.¹ Similarly, in early Mālikī and Ṣāhīrī 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 *dhimmis*. It also seems to have factored into Mālikī legalists prohibitions against allowing non-Muslims to enter mosques except in very limited situations.² 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.³ 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.⁴ 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.⁵ 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.⁶ While most laws were proscriptive, others made accommodation for dona-

1 Freidenreich, "Christians in Early and Classical Shī'ī Law" Prior to the eleventh century, according to Freidenreich, opinions about the impurity of *dhimmis* 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.⁷ 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.⁸ 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.⁹

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

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, “*Ḥanīf <ḥanpā>*”; Blois, “*Naṣrānī*.”

7 Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, I.5; Weltecke, “Zum syrisch-orthodoxen Leben,” esp. 604–5. Bar Hebraeus also uses derivatives from ܡܠܟܐ 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 الغرباء، 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 هولاء زينا للفتنديل 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.”¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ 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, *Majmūʿ 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.¹⁷ It is not clear whether “stranger” (*ghurabāʾ* 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.¹⁸

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 Jōhannān ʿEṣṭūnārā to Jaʿqōb (Jacob of Edessa ca. 640–708 CE) Jōhannān inquires:

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.²⁴

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.²⁵

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.²⁶ 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.²⁷ 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."

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:

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.

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

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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.³² 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.³³ 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.³⁴ 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.³⁵ For example, on one Jewish accounts list, Goitein found a gift of charity to the Muezzin living near the synagogue of the Palestinians.³⁶ In another Geniza document the Christian (*al-’arel* אלערל) “Good” (*טוב* טוב) also seems to be a recipient.³⁷ 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.³⁸ 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

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 , hilkhot yesodei ha-Torah,” chap. 5.6–8, p. 36, “Sefer Qedushah, hilkhot ma’akhalot,” chap. 11.3–7, p. 287, chap. 12.7, 26 pp. 288, 289, chap. 13 pp. 289–290, “Sefer Shoftim, hilkhot 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, hilkhot ma’akhalot,” chap. 12.20.

35 Moses b. Maimon, *Mishnah Torah*, “Sefer Shoftim, hilkhot evel,” chap. 3.3, chap.14.12, pp. 759, 764, “Sefer Shoftim, hilkhot 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.³⁹ 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

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.⁴⁰ 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.⁴¹ 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."⁴² 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 *dhimmis* 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.⁴³ 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.⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵ 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.⁴⁶ 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 factions⁴⁷ Whether spontaneous, or

44 Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd, *Histoire*, PO vol. 47 fasc. 4 no. 212, p. 442/443.

45 Cohen, "What Was the Pact of 'Umar?"; Simonsohn, "Between Separation and Assimilation"; Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd, *Histoire*, PO vol. 23, fasc. 3, p. 490.

46 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."

47 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.⁴⁸ 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.⁴⁹ 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.⁵⁰ 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.⁵¹ 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.

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.⁵²

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.⁵³ 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.⁵⁴

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 zimmis"; 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 دياره بو مقار بو ادى هبيب و نزل بها و اضافة الرهبان و كل من معه و اكثروا لهم الخير مما يوجد عند 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.⁵⁵ 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.⁵⁶

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.⁵⁷

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 HOCF vol. 4, pt. 1 *Cyril III, Ibn Lakak 1216–1243*, Arabic, 50–51, English, 105.

⁵⁶ هذه الأيام كانت إماما مباركة الكنائس تعمر بالذهار ناذن مولانا السلطان و فتاوى الفقهاء و النصارى مكرمون معزوزون ركاب الخيل و البغال و لا يطالبهم احد بغيرار و السلطان مراعى للرهبان منعم عليهم محسن اليهم و ارثهم بعضهم للبعض لا يدخل بينهم يد حشريه و كذلك و النصارى و اليهود تقبل اقوال مقدميهم في انسابهم HOCF vol. 4, pt. 1 *Cyril III, Ibn Lakak 1216–1243*, Arabic, 60, English, 125–26.

⁵⁷ HOCF 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.⁵⁸ 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!"⁵⁹

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.⁶⁰

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.”⁶¹ 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*).⁶²

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.⁶³ 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.⁶⁴ 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.⁶⁵

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 Buṣṭur, “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.⁶⁶ 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.⁶⁷

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.⁶⁸ 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 Mizraḥī 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.⁶⁹ In contrast to Marmorstein, who maintained that the writer was objecting to Muslim occupation of Jewish holy sites, Prawer took the refer-

⁶⁶ HOCV vol. 2, pt. 3 *Christodoulus-Michael 1046–1102*, Arabic, 187, English, 285–86.

⁶⁷ Aron-Beller, “Byzantine Tales of Jewish Image Desecration”; Csepregi, “Mysteries for the Uninitiated”; Déroche, “Regards croisés des hérésiologues”; Rubin, *Gentile Tales*.

⁶⁸ 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.

⁶⁹ 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.⁷⁰ 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.⁷¹ Assuming that Prawer'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.⁷² 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.⁷³ Similarly, at a well of sweet water, whose blessing Yitgaddal claims is connected to King David, Muslims come to pray.⁷⁴ One sixteenth-century author comments about Hebron

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 Prawer, *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.”⁷⁵ 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.⁷⁶ In fact, Rabban Gamliel’s tomb was considered to be the burial site of one of the Prophet Muḥammad’s companions, Abū Hureira.⁷⁷ 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.⁷⁸ 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.”⁷⁹

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.⁸⁰ 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.⁸¹

⁷⁵ Ilan, *Graves of the Righteous*, 153. וקורין לה עין אברהם אל-כליל ושמה מתפללים הישמעאלים בטהרה ובנקיות. 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. ואינו מק[לל] לגויים בעוור[תא]

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 *Iggerot ‘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.⁸² 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.⁸³ 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.⁸⁴ Not all Jews contented themselves with

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 Âge"; 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.⁸⁵ 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 Nagid 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.⁸⁶ A couple of elements of the letter are worth highlighting. The wife says Baṣīr mixes with “the poor ones” (*al-faqrā'* אֶלְפִקְרָא) who have the appearance (*dhāhir* נֹאֲהָר) but not the internal (*bāṭin* בִּטָּן) or “essence”, on the mountain, where there is “no recollection of the Name of God in truth” (לֹא זִכִּירַת הַשֵּׁם עַל הָאֵמֶת).⁸⁷ 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.”⁸⁸ 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 אן יחצל תם אדם רע יוצא אותו מן הדת ותצא 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.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, before this point, Vital states, “I asked him for an incantation, as is the custom.”⁹⁰ 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.⁹¹ 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 Hayyim 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.⁹² 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.⁹³ 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.⁹⁴ 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.”⁹⁵ 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-ruah,” 186; Cuffel, “From Geographical Migration to Transmigration of Souls”; Cuffel, “Gendered Visions”; Faiersstein, “*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.⁹⁶ 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.⁹⁷ 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.⁹⁸

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.⁹⁹ 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; 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-Quṣayrīs*, 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*s

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.¹⁰⁰ 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.¹⁰¹

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.¹⁰² 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.¹⁰³ At the same time, such tales also point to the possibility or fear

100 al-Yāfi’i, *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 Ḍāfir, *Risāla de Ṣafī al-Dīn*, Arabic, 96–97, French, 201–2, Arabic fol. 127b–128a; al-Yāfi’i, *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.¹⁰⁴ 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!"¹⁰⁵

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.¹⁰⁶ 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.¹⁰⁷ 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 بأحابيه إنما 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.¹⁰⁸

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."¹⁰⁹ 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.¹¹⁰

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. و سألتها و استأذنتها في ذلك. فأذنت لها. فأنت بها اليها. 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 تمر به على أعضائها. فشفيت بإذن الله تعالى. وقامت تمشي كأن لم يكن بها شيء. فلما جاء أهلها خرجت اليها تمشي. 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-durriyyah*, 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.¹¹¹ 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.¹¹² 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.¹¹³ 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."¹¹⁴ 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, Ṣaḥī 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.¹¹⁵

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.¹¹⁶ 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 *dhimmis*’ 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.

115 استمراراً حسنًا باجتماع قلوب الكافة عليه و كان حسن الاخلاق كثير المشى فى حوائج الناس و الدخول معهم فى مصالحهم مرغوباً لذلك يمشى فى حاجة الكبير و الصغير و الحر و العبد و المسلم و الكافر تحبه سائر الطوائف و الملل; Ibn Zāfir, *Risāla de Ṣaḥī 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.¹¹⁷

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.¹¹⁸ 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, unproblematic 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

وبها بيعة عظيمة عامرة حسنة البناء، مبنية على عمد الرخام منمقة بالفسيفساء، يقال لها النجران، ينذر لها المسلمون والنصارى، 117 نكروا أن النذر لها مجرب، ولنذرهم 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).¹¹⁹ 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.¹²⁰ 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.¹²¹ 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.¹²² 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.¹²³ 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 sites 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.¹²⁴

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.¹²⁵ 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.¹²⁶ 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.¹²⁷ 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.”¹²⁸ 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.¹²⁹ 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.¹³⁰ 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-ābṣār*, 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 فَاَللّٰهُ تَعٰی يَجْعَلُهَا دَارَ الْاِسْلَامِ بِنَهْ و كَرَمِهٖ اِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ تَعٰی; 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.¹³¹ Along with entering churches and monasteries, Muslims also observed Christian festivities there. For example, Ibn Jubayr visits the church in Palermo during Christmas.¹³² 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.¹³³ 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.¹³⁴ 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.¹³⁵ 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:

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.¹³⁶

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.¹³⁷

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.¹³⁸ 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.¹³⁹ 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

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’Affrica*, 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.¹⁴⁰

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.¹⁴¹

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.¹⁴² 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."¹⁴³ 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 במקום 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.¹⁴⁴ 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.¹⁴⁵ 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.¹⁴⁶ 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.¹⁴⁷ 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.”¹⁴⁸ 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 الموضع 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 [ʿAzra]—not the Ezra who is the transmitter and copyist of the Torah. God knows best.¹⁴⁹

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.¹⁵⁰ 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.¹⁵¹

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.¹⁵² At first

¹⁴⁹ و تحت الحلة قرية يقال لها شوشة بها قبر ابي القاسم بن موسى بن جعفر رضى. و بها لليهود من الزيارات هناك قبر ذي الكفل و هو حزقيال النبي عم في موضع يقال له برملاحة شرقي قرية يقال لها قسونا. 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.¹⁵³ 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.¹⁵⁴

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.¹⁵⁵ 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.¹⁵⁶ 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-

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.”¹⁵⁷ 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.¹⁵⁸ 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 *dhimmis* 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.¹⁵⁹ 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.¹⁶⁰

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

وبه شاهد على زعمهم من حوار يبي عيسى، عليه السلام، زعم رهبانه انه يشفي المرضى، وكان البطين الشاعر قد مرض فجاؤوا به 160 اليه يستشفى فيه فقيل ان اهل غفلوا عنه فبال قدام قبر الشاهد، واتفق ان مات عقيب ذلك، فشايع بين اهل حمص ان الشاهد قتله وقصدوا الدبر ليهدموه و قالوا: نصراني يقتل مسلماً لا نرضى! أو تسلموا اليها عظام الشاهد حتى نحرقها، فرشا النصارى 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.¹⁶¹

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."¹⁶² 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

¹⁶¹ و عليها مسجد بقي محرابه على حاله، و وضع الافرنج في شرقيه محرابا لهم، فالمسلم و الكافر يجتمعان فيه: يستقبل هذا مصلا، 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

¹⁶² 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," "atrociousness" 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.

space of *'ayn al-baqar* is only accepted under duress, and unlike with Christian and Jewish narratives of Muslim attendance of places or rituals they considered holy, for Ibn Jubayr, the Christian presence adds no honour to the holy place.

This instance from Ibn Jubayr's narrative, is a clear example of an appropriated holy site, where the subjugated population continues to frequent a site they considered holy side by side with those who had conquered and reshaped the site according to their own religious sensibilities. As various scholars have demonstrated, certain saints, such as Mary in Iberia and the New World, or al-Khidr in the Middle East and much of West and Central Asia, or Aḥmad al-Badawī in Egypt, served as pivotal holy figures, chosen because of their standing in multiple confessions, identification with other, accepted figures by competing, subjugated groups, or their military associations, making them ideal figures to symbolize conquest (or resistance).¹⁶³ Often such figures combined all of these qualities. Yet sites could be appropriated and shared while retaining specific, local associations as well, as in this instance.

When discussing the cathedral mosque in Damascus, which Muslims had originally established as a mixed mosque/church when they conquered the city, Ibn Jubayr presents Muslim control over Christians at every turn. In his version, Caliph al-Walid ibn 'Abd al-Malik (705–715 CE) demanded craftsmen from Byzantium for the beautification of the building, threatening the Byzantine emperor if he did not comply. After a convoluted description of how Eastern half became a mosque, whereas the Western half remained a church, he recounts:

The Christians asserted that whosoever should destroy it would be stricken mad, but Walid replied at once, 'I shall be the first to go mad in the service of God'. The Christians had sought the protection of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Azīz—may God hold him in his favour—at the time of his caliphate [634–44] and had brought forward a pact which they had recovered from the companions of the Prophet—may God hold them in his favour—allowing it to remain to them. He proposed to give it back to them, but the Muslims were disquieted at this, so he compensated the Christians with a great sum which satisfied them and which they accepted.¹⁶⁴

Christian claims to miraculous protection are summarily obliterated by the Caliph Walid, who calls their bluff. His declaration that he would be the first to become "mad for God" (*yajunnu fī Allāh*) emphasizes the caliph's bravery and dedication to God, which stands in stark contrast to the Christians who, ultimately place pecuniary over spiritual

163 Remensnyder, *La Conquistadora*; Mayeur-Jaouen, *Al-Sayyid Aḥmad al-Badawī*; Wolper, "Khidr and the Politics of Translation"; Pancaroglu, "The Itinerant Dragon-Slayer"; Meri, "Re-Appropriating Sacred Space"; Albera, ed., *Lieux Saints Partagés*; Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam*, 1:319–36.

164 وكانوا يزعمون أن الذي يهدم كنيسهم يجنّ، فيأمر الوليد و قال: أنا أول من يجنّ في الله، و بدأ الهدم بيده فيأمر المسلمون و أكملوا و هدمه. و استعدوا عمر بن العزيز رضى الله عنه أيام خلافته، و أخرجوا العهد الذي بأيديهم من الصحابة رضى الله عنهم في إبقائه عليهم، فهم بصره اليهم، فأشفق المسلمون من ذلك، ثم عوضهم منه بمال عظيم أرضاهم به، فقبلوه Ibn Jubayr, *Rihlat*, 184–85; Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 272–73. The cited passage is on 273.

gain by selling their holy space to the Muslims, and thus, theoretically, ending any shared veneration or Christian claim to the place.¹⁶⁵

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.¹⁶⁶ 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.¹⁶⁷

Accounts of Muslim participation in Christian or Jewish festivals, processions for a religious leader, or visiting holy sites in Eastern Christian and Jews 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”.

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-Walid’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.¹⁶⁸ 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.¹⁶⁹ 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.¹⁷⁰ 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-

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-ʿUmarī, 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-ʿUmarī and Yāqūt end by denying or denouncing this Christian practice and the beliefs behind it, despite having replicated much of al-Shābushtī's account.¹⁷¹ 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 *zaʿama* (زعم) which suggests or, at least leaves open the possibility that what they say is not true.¹⁷² Occasionally he is more explicit in his disapproval, for example, when describing the monastery of Maghtīs he proclaims: "all of their claims about it are their lies and fantasies!"¹⁷³ Campbell attributes such narrative strategies among Muslim authors to greater competition between Muslim and Christian claims regarding holy sites from the crusading period onwards.¹⁷⁴ 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-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-ābṣār* 1:360–61; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam 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-ʿUmarī 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.

