CONCLUSIONS

IN A RECENT article, Benjamin Kedar returned to his earlier project of categorizing religious encounters at shared sacred sites. In it he laments that there have been few historical studies of shared sacred spaces in the Levant, and even fewer efforts to create a typology of this phenomenon in the medieval period in contrast to the numerous anthropological studies on shared practices and religious sites in the modern era. A selection of these, and his own historical investigations led him to conclude that true sharing, or harmonious encounters rarely, if ever characterized multi-religious encounters at sites, an observation which echoes his earlier articles, although in this case he questions the accuracy of the term shared sites or rituals altogether.[1] He is, of course, correct. Yet thanks to his own research and that of many others in a variety of disciplines, few scholars familiar with the topic and the theoretical work which has been done on pilgrimage and "shared" sites in any era would anticipate harmonious or "egalitarian" convergence. To return to some of the points with which I began this study, shared sites, rituals or holy people, whether living, dead, or imagined, are, intrinsically, phenomena of "difficult difference." It is/was the *threat* of "egalitarian convergence", and the implied dissolution of hierarchies and boundaries between communities that prompts or prompted the various rhetorical and legal strategies of using shared sites and holy places to reinforce difference and hierarchy examined in this book. In this light, the older theories of Victor and Edith Turner regarding *communitas* seem naïve. Yet, following them, I would still argue, that pilgrimage does create its own time, space, and rules, and, a situation in which boundaries between those of different religious communities, ethnicities, social status, or genders are challenged precisely because they are brought together in unaccustomed ways that do not fit the quotidian categories established by those in power. The resulting polemical posturing, which this book explores, is an expression of the conflict between what the Turners termed "social structure" and "anti-structure."[2]

That said, what should now be apparent, is that shared sites, saints, and festivals are not merely about pilgrimage. The patterns of encounter and narrative about sharing and difference from the eleventh to the sixteenth, or even eighteenth centuries in lands surrounding the Mediterranean and in inland territories with deep ties to Mediterranean lands based on cultural, religious, mercantile and martial exchanges are also more complex and culturally specific than those patterns identified through broad anthropological comparisons.

Jews and Christians from Western Europe travelling to the Middle East to sites either or both deemed holy created hierarchies of religious otherness in their presentations of religious plurality at these holy places. Both perceived the presence and participation of members of religious communities outside of their own as an indication of outsiders'

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1 Kedar, "Studying the 'Shared Sacred Spaces.'" His other earlier articles on this topic include: "Convergences…Saydnaya and the Knights Templar"; "Convergences…Saydnaya."

2 See the Introduction for a lengthier discussion of these concepts and relevant literature.

recognition of the power of a given author's saint or holy place. Muslim participation was the most emphasized and celebrated in these texts, whereas the presence of Jews or Christians (depending on the writer's religious affiliation) was often ignored or downplayed, even when describing sites, such as Hebron, well known for attracting Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. When European Jewish and Christian authors did include mention of one another, occasionally they did so in a relatively mild or neutral fashion, like Niccolo of Poggibonsi. More often they did so in starkly hierarchical and polemical ways. Felix Fabri is particularly notable in this regard, for while he discusses all non-Christians in very negative ways, as we have shown, Muslims are the least objectionable and most "useful," Jews are powerless and more odious than Muslims, and Samaritans the most contemptable of all. The author of the Jewish travelogue of Petachia of Regensburg is less harsh; Muslims are usually either praiseworthy or "mendable" in the face of chastisement from the Jewish holy dead, whereas Christians oppose Jews and their holy places, and are suitably thwarted. I have argued in Chapter 2 that, for European Christian and Jewish travellers, the religious other needed to remain "other" for it was in that capacity of outsider that their veneration had the most discursive power. Muslims were the most valuable other, because, as a politically puissant opponent to Europe, and rulers of the regions containing the holy sites, their "witness" to a Jewish or Christian saint, ritual or site's truth was the most powerful. This factor, plus the unlikelihood and impracticability of Muslim conversion to either Christianity or Judaism in an Islamicate context precluded conversion as an imagined outcome to shared holy persons or sites.

Muslim travellers, whether from Europe or Islamicate lands, rarely highlighted the presence of Jews or Christians at their holy sites, even at those known to have drawn members from multiple religions. A notable exception to this is al-Harawī, who was writing during the crusades. In general, Jewish and Muslim authors seem to have been more likely to comment upon Christians during the crusades, presumably because Christians were a source of trouble for both. Additionally, Muslim travel writers do depict themselves as going to churches or being present at ritual celebrations of other religious communities, mostly Christian, but the reasons that they give for doing so is markedly different than the motivations attributed to them by Christians and Jews. For these Muslim authors, churches, monasteries, synagogues and non-Muslim celebrations mostly seemed a target of touristic curiosity. When attending the graves of the venerated dead, including those revered by non-Muslims, Muslim authors frequently either cast doubts on Jewish or Christian traditions associated with the holy site, or ignored them altogether. For Muslim travellers, assured as they were of their own power, there was no need to note veneration on the part of the religious other in support of their own religious tradition or holy person. This attitude is strikingly different from what we find in *ṭabaqāt* relating to Sufis. I argue that Sufis sought and needed to augment their individual prestige, in part because Sufism and its adherents were being challenged within some Islamic circles. The "witness" of the religious other helped to boost a Sufi figure's status.

As I demonstrated in Chapter 3, Christians and Jews under Islamic rule both also celebrate the presence of the religious other at their holy sites and festivals. As with their Western counterparts, the religious other, most particularly Muslims, served to enhance

the status of a given religious leader, holy place, or celebration. Unlike European Jews and Christians, they seem to have been more welcoming of one another's veneration, and make a less stark distinction between Muslims and members of the religious other lacking political power. This tendency is slightly stronger for Christians under Islamic rule, than for Jews, who remain mildly hostile.

In hagiographic narratives, whether by Jews, Christians, or Muslims from Western Europe, Byzantine territories, or Islamicate lands, I have shown that the religious other is also often a witness to the truth and power of a given holy person and the religion s/he represents. In such narratives, whether the religious other converts often depends on where the hagiography was written and who was in power. Hagiographies composed by authors of a religious community holding uncontested political dominance in a region, such as the Christians of Northern Europe, or Muslim authors of Sufi biographies in Islamicate lands, regularly portray the religious other as converting to Christianity or Islam respectively. Sometimes this is accomplished through the kindness of a given holy person, at others, the member of the religious other is punished or shamed into submission. Often the level of violence or antagonism evinced toward the religious other is connected to the degree of threat—real or imagined—that the religious other is perceived as posing, or the state of relations between a given religious minority and the group in power. Texts written by authors from the politically dominant religious community but in borderlands, in which that dominance is contested, often waiver between having the religious other convert or portraying them as respecting the saint but retaining their original religious affiliation. Iberia is a good example of such a "borderland."[3]

Hagiographies, whether as stand-alone collections, or tales embedded in chronicles, travel narratives, or other types of texts, composed by those not in power, do not usually depict the religious other as converting. In this one may see a parallel with the Western European Christian and Jewish pilgrimage accounts of their travels in Islamicate lands, which, indeed, often have mini-hagiographies embedded within them. As in the hagiographies composed by those in a position of power, however, recognition and reverence by a member of the religious other is an occasion of celebration and a demonstration of the truth and power of the "saint" and the religion s/he represents. Similarly, how well-treated the religious other is by a given holy person, living or dead, depends on the state of relations between the community of the author, and that of the religious other featured in the story. One may see this tendency clearly in the portrayal of differences between R. Jacob Goiozo's relatively positive interactions with Muslims and the death and destruction visited upon R. Goiozo's Christian opponent in the Ottoman Jewish chronicle of Joseph Sambari discussed in Chapter 4.[4] An exception to some of these overarching tendencies is the *Miracula Sancti Isidori*. While many of the encounters between

3 I have touched upon this tendency in this book, but it is elucidated more clearly in Cuffel, "Henceforward," although in this case, focusing entirely on Marian miracles.

4 Most stand-alone Jewish hagiographical collections featuring encounters between Jews and non-Jews seem to come from Ashkenaz and thus have not been featured in this book, however, the patterns described above hold for true for many of these narratives as well. See Drees, *Beyond Violence*; Raspe, *Jüdische Hagiographie*.

this Christian saint and Muslims or Jews are characterized by veneration and conversion or punishment, in at least one story, as I have shown in Chapter 6, the saint's task is to prevent shared veneration, rather than revel in it. The relatively harsh tone in the collection overall, and negative stance toward shared veneration in some tales, I argued, reflect the collection's origin in an area where there was often war between Christians and Muslims in the region.

Hagiographies of the religious other need to be considered as part of a discussion of shared saints, places, and rituals, for they embody the imagined encounter and veneration of the religious other. Travel narratives themselves, as indicated, are full of such tales, which in turn resemble hagiographic collections and accounts disconnected from the verisimilitude of a specific time and place. The purpose of either, however, is much the same, namely to create narratives about encounter and religious interest on the part of the religious other in such a way as to use both to affirm the differences between communities, and to control those moments when those differences were challenged, transforming them into affirmations of the superiority of the author's own faith.

When the desired religious other declined to cooperate and participate in rituals affirming the power and truth of the religion of those in power, in Western Europe, Christians at times *required* Jews and Muslims to participate in public religious rituals or tax laws framed in the language of religious donation. I have argued that in part, this practice came from Muslim and Jewish participation in secular processions and ceremonies, so that in Iberia especially, it became unimaginable to have public processions without Jews and Muslims. Jews and Muslims themselves vied for the opportunity to join these, because to do so elevated and affirmed their status and belonging within the local community. While anecdotal evidence indicates that they were less than enthusiastic about joining in *religious* processions of Christians, for Western European Christians, public processions and celebrations became a way of enacting religious hierarchies. Muslims and Jews were pushed to physically do what Christian travel narratives and hagiographies depicted in writing, namely lend their otherness to the veneration and glorification of Christians' holy persons, places, and/or rituals. Having Muslims and Jews show reverence to Christian holy objects, or religious leaders such as the Pope, forced both to openly admit to and display their subjugated and religiously inferior status for the delectation of a Christian audience. Ritualized violence against Jews was a more extreme expression of the same impulse. Muslim participation in Christian, ritualized violence against the Jews seems to have been both an expression of competition between the two minority communities, and an effort on the part of the Muslims to become more integrated into Iberian society. Jews, on the other hand, worked to reinterpret, reframe, and even visibly (obvious to them, hidden to the Christians) subvert Christian ceremonies in which they were required to participate. The practice of requiring a member of a religiously subjugated community to participate in the religious rituals of the dominant, I have dubbed "forced sharing."

"Imagined" or "hermeneutical" sharing is another category, though it is far more diffuse and difficult to pinpoint than forced sharing. In a way, nearly all the narratives describing shared veneration constitute "imagined sharing" since each of them interprets the shared site, ritual or participation in ways that confirmed the religious outlook

of the author. However, the numerous descriptions of certain practices, often by members of different religious communities, indicate that despite multifarious agendas evident in the texts, a real practice is at the core. Hagiographies of the religious other may be classified as a kind of hermeneutical version of shared saint veneration. Late medieval and early modern Iberian processions in which Christians dressed up and played the roles assigned to Jews or Muslims in the past, when there was no longer a Jewish or Muslim community in Iberia to compel, is another example. Accusations of Judaizing between Armenian, Byzantine and Western European Christians is the final example. As I argued in Chapter 6, accusations that the other adopted Jewish practices was a way of creating and affirming difference between Christian communities by using a religious outsider who had come to symbolize the very antipathy of Christian identity.

Opposition to shared saints, festivals and holy sites is perhaps more straightforward, but no less rife with rhetoric, nor less informative about the actual practices. With this observation, let me turn from typologies of the representation of shared practices, to some more concretely historical considerations. Regarding opposition, I repeat the assertion made in the Introduction, that much of the arguments and tone of *bida'* writing by Muslim authors in Egypt and the Levant spring either directly from emigrants from the Maghrib and al-Andalus, or their influence. This connection between the two regions and *bida'* writing in them is potentially significant when analyzing other Muslim territories touched upon in this book, namely Kurdish, Turkic, and Persian polities. Starting with Hasluck's two-volume study of religious practice and sharing in Asia Minor, if not earlier, scholars have long speculated about the relative "tolerance" and extent of shared practices in Asia Minor in contrast to attitudes among Muslims and other religious communities in the Eastern and Western Mediterranean. Various suggestions have included the influence of Bektashi or other Sufi groups, the incomplete Islamicization of the Seljuks or Mongols, the need to be able to move and function readily within both Byzantine and Islamic, extensive marriage between Christian women and Muslim rulers, among others. Within a solely Muslim context, I would tentatively suggest that an additional factor is the substantial influence of Mālikī anti-*bida'* argumentation. Furthermore, we could pose the question differently, why were Muslim legalists in certain parts of the Islamicate world more stringent and disinclined to allow shared religious customs, which had clearly been going on for a long time, than in other parts of the Islamic world? To suggest that what legal school was prevalent in a given region had an impact religious interactions is hardly surprising, especially with the recent work of Mahmood Kooria on the effect of Shāfi'ī law on the cultures and encounters within the Indian Ocean.[5] Ibn Taymiyya himself, blamed the Fatimids for the existence and persistence of what he considered inappropriate practices, which was a polemical stance in itself, as we have seen. Yet, I would suggest that future scholars wishing to investigate shared practices, would do well to consider carefully David Freidenreich's insistence that we need to pay attention to the nuances of difference between legal systems and the communities who produce them. This necessity comes to the fore quite clearly when considering the legal stance of various Eastern Christian communities regard-

5 Kooria, *Islamic Law in Circulation*.

ing donations by non-Christians to churches, their presence in them, and the "baptism" of non-Christians, specifically Muslims. The range of legislation, as we have seen, goes from welcoming outsiders to participate in Christian ritual, to complete prohibition, and using the willingness to "baptize" Muslims to condemn other Christians. These differences, in addition to potentially telling us something about how each Christian (and Muslim) community viewed one another, themselves, and constructed boundaries between self and other, remind us of point made by Horden, Purcell, and Chantois, discussed in the Introduction to this book, namely that specific cultural, economic, and religious contexts of a given phenomenon or practice are more important for understanding it than its origins, or broad categorization. The differences *between* religious communities, within the general categories of "Christian," "Jewish," and "Muslim," even within a single region, matter. In this particular case, the differences identified in this book in various Christian communities' willingness to welcome outsiders to join their rituals or enter their holy spaces raises the question whether the differences how and whether shared practices were conducted might lie not entirely with the Muslims, but equally with the Christian communities, who remained the numerical majority in some regions, and a substantive percentage of the population after that.[6] Differing densities of Jewish populations and their relative power relationship, not merely with the community who held ultimate political power, but also relative to other minority communities also deserves consideration, although obtaining this information would be challenging with the current sources. Furthermore, there are populations which are frequently neglected when attempting to analyze interreligious relations in the Mediterranean and connected regions. Samaritans, Zoroastrians, and Karaites have occasionally appeared in this study, yet, a future, deeper investigation into shared or contested religious practices would consider how these communities fit within the network of interreligious interactions, both on their own terms, and in the rhetoric of those who encountered them. Also instructive, would be to examine intra-religious sharing and competition. Christian communities struggled to define themselves relative to one another, and many of the prohibitions against "shared" practices are, in fact, directed at other Christians. The extent to which the same is true in other communities bears further exploration. How any intra-religious sharing or conflict over holy sites played into the kinds of interreligious "sharing" discussed in this book, remains an open question.

Certainly, who held power mattered, both in terms of the lived realities of interactions and, specifically, shared practices, and in the discourses that developed around them. Recognizing multiple powers were or are often at play, and that local politics and culture can and did trump the dominant narrative or legislation regarding shared practices and interreligious relations more broadly would also nuance future examinations of interactions and shared rituals between Jewish, Christian, and/or Muslim communities. A good example of this principle is the disconnect between papal legislation and local practice in late medieval Iberia concerning Jewish and Muslim participation in Christian festivities discussed in Chapter 6.

6 For example, see Kurt Werthmuller discussion of population change among Copts in Ayyubid Egypt. Werthmuller, *Coptic Identity and Ayyubid Politics*, 62–66, 75–79.

While much has been said about the conflicting claims of religious superiority in written accounts of shared practices, one may ask: what of those who were observed, but did not write? Is this a study only of religious elites and their frustrations? On the one hand, historians of pre-modern cultures struggle to find ways of uncovering the behaviours and attitudes of those who could not or did not write. Certainly, a study of shared holy sites would benefit from an extensive archaeological exploration, which scholars have done for individual sites. Doing so, would in part reveal something about the practices of those who did not write. However, I would return to the oft-repeated insistence by those working on "popular culture" that popular culture is something shared by all, by definition. The activities of Islamic travel writers is a case and point. They often engaged in behaviours—going to church, for example—about which their colleagues fumed in anti-*bida'* or other prescriptive treatises. This is not to say that social status made no difference. Kedar's call, at the end of his most recent article, to consider these factors is much needed. However, elite sources do hint at what the rest of the population were doing, like the accounts of Muslim and Christian women bringing their children to be baptized. Grehan's suggestion that some practices relating to essential life cycle processes, superseded or existed parallel to confessional religious practices is a convincing one, that would benefit from further study.

Finally, the undertaking to do a study of the Mediterranean, whether or not readers deem it a successful one, shows several things. First, there were a body of shared symbols and attitudes among peoples in the Mediterranean which fed a common, although not identical, understanding of sanctity, ritual, etc., and facilitated shared practices, as evidenced by their evocation in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim text from multiple locales. However, these shared symbols were not confined to the Mediterranean. The movement of people, texts, images, etc., in which the Mediterranean played a large role, created a much larger network than the regions immediately connected to the sea. However, I would argue that the plurality and cross-religious or cross-cultural contact which the Mediterranean enabled, created environments in immediately adjacent lands which forced the inhabitants to address difference, in ways that regions farther inland did not always have to do. Whether or not an individual came from a pluralistic region combined with local cultural, religious, and political factors to substantively affect the description and understanding of "shared" practices. The contested lands of Anatolia and the Caucasus possessed many of the same inter-connected, pluralistic characteristic of the Mediterranean, and parts of it, were, indeed, linked to the Mediterranean. What awaits to be done is not so much a historical examination of shared holy sites and festivals in the medieval Levant, but rather a study of how such practices, and the discourses which accompanied them, were historically entangled throughout the Mediterranean, West and Central Asia, India, and East Africa.