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Shared
Sacred
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المواقع
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THE
GRADUATE
CENTER
CITY UNIVERSITY
OF NEW YORK

The
Morgan
Library &
Museum

EDITED BY
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According to some theorists of late capitalism and globalization, we live in an age of de-territorialization, when markets and technologies have detached people and culture from place. Much of the place we now live in, so a version of one argument goes, is not really ours: sites that used to be public (parks, neighborhoods, even some institutions) have been privatized; houses that our parents owned now belong to financial institutions; Myspace is not really my space at all. The virtual spaces that we build, frequent, and inhabit are confected territories of an online world built on code and dependent on servers, neither of which we can grasp, much less occupy.

What a privilege it is then for The Graduate Center of The City University of New York to have joined The New York Public Library and The Morgan Library & Museum in hosting—and so exhibiting and exploring—*Shared Sacred Sites*. What better way is there to celebrate the imperiled but perennial interaction between humankind, culture, and place? Is there a more pressing moment to do so than now, when hoary and insidious notions of civilization, culture, foreign, and homeland cloud national debates?

As a scholar who has devoted much of his research and writing to the task of reconstructing how Muslims of the premodern period understood their place and time, I feel a special gratitude to my university, library, and museum colleagues who envisioned and organized this exhibition. Much differentiates our modern public institutions, but a mission to curate, interrogate, and preserve the past and present conjoins them. They too are shared spaces that invite the public to participate in devotions and rituals of a powerfully democratic character.

Chase F. Robinson

President

The Graduate Center of The City University of New York

Manoël Pénicaud,
Mosque of Omar on the
Dormition Day of Mary,
Old Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
2015 (detail, see p. 128)



It gives me great pleasure to have participated in *Shared Sacred Sites* along with The New York Public Library and The Graduate Center of The City University of New York. For our contribution to this collaborative exhibition, The Morgan Library & Museum displayed one of our greatest treasures, the Morgan Picture Bible, arguably made in Paris for Louis IX around 1250. Also known as the Crusader Bible, Maciejowski Bible, and Shah 'Abbas Bible, the illustrated manuscript depicts some of the greatest visualizations of the Old Testament ever made.

The later history and peregrinations of the manuscript make it especially relevant to this project. Originally the Bible's illustrations did not include captions; the manuscript's later owners added the inscriptions, reflecting three major faiths and giving rise to its unique ecumenical character. A Christian in southern Italy added the Latin inscriptions in the late thirteenth century. The Persian inscriptions were commissioned by the great Shah 'Abbas I after he received the manuscript as a diplomatic gift from Polish Cardinal Bernard Maciejowski in 1608. A Persian-speaking Jew who obtained the manuscript at some point after the fall of Isfahan in 1722 added the Judeo-Persian inscriptions. The Old Testament stories were used and adapted by Christians, who viewed them in relation to Christ, and by Muslims, who pointed out connections to Mohammed.

We are grateful to Anthony W. Marx, President of The New York Public Library, for having invited us to be part of this imaginative and fascinating collaboration, and to Karen Barkey and Suzana Greene, the exhibition organizer and manager, respectively. I would also like to thank emeritus curator William M. Voelkle, who has contributed an essay about the Morgan Picture Bible to this publication.

Colin B. Bailey
Director
The Morgan Library & Museum

We live in an era unlike almost anything that we have seen before, when the core values of the enlightenment are globally under fire. Inclusion, respect, empathy, creativity, opportunity, and the very idea of truth are all being threatened. We are told that these challenges are inevitable. The evidence begins with religion—different faiths are declared irresolvable and therefore conflict is deemed inevitable.

This publication powerfully states otherwise. Yes, we have our differences, which can and should enrich us all. But we can also coexist. We have forgotten the many places where people of different beliefs come together. Here is the evidence, the facts that we can pray and be spiritual together.

Everything is at stake now. At this crux, we can divide and fight and kill each other, or we can remind ourselves of the beauty in our differences. We can learn from and live with each other. If we can pray together, then we will survive and even thrive.

Shared Sacred Sites presents examples of our better angels, who are waiting to be found all around us. The multipart exhibition at The New York Public Library, The Morgan Library & Museum, and The Graduate Center at The City University of New York revealed an international movement that was inspired by each global participant.

We are indebted to the inspiring work of all involved in bringing this project to New Amsterdam, which was founded on the basis of religious “tolerance.” Transformed into a global capital, New York's strength continues to be inclusion.

We are ready and need to be transformed by what *Shared Sacred Sites* teaches us.

Anthony W. Marx
President
The New York Public Library

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As a collaborative project, *Shared Sacred Sites* has relied on the generosity and effort of many institutions and individuals. All of the scholars, artists, and museum professionals embodied the core values of this collaboration, which signifies coexistence and tolerance.

Over the course of the last several years before arriving in New York, *Shared Sacred Sites* has traveled from the Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée (Mucem) in Marseille, France, to the following institutions and cities: the National Bardo Museum in Tunis; the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, the Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, and Yeni Cami (the former Archeological Museum) in Thessaloniki, Greece; the Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration in Paris; and the Dar-El-Bacha-Museum of Confluences in Marrakesh, Morocco. We would like to thank Jean-François Chougnat, Isabelle Marquette, and Mikael Mohamed at Mucem for the Marseille, Tunis, and Marrakesh exhibitions; Moncef Ben Moussa, Najib Ben Lazreg, and Fatma Naityghil at Bardo Museum for the Tunis version; Thouli Misirloglou at the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art and Hercules Papaioannou, Stergios Karavatos, and Danae Tezapsidou at Thessaloniki Museum of Photography for the three iterations in Thessaloniki; Hélène Orain and Benjamin Stora at the Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration for the Paris exhibition; and Medhi Qotbi and Abdellaziz El-Idrissi at the Fondation Nationale des Musées du Maroc for the installation in Marrakesh. Special thanks also go to the academic institutions: Aix-Marseille University, Marseille; Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS), Paris; LabexMed/Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences de l'Homme, Aix-en-Provence, France; Institut d'ethnologie méditerranéenne, européenne et comparative (Idemec), Aix-en-Provence, France; and the Center for Democracy, Toleration, and Religion at Social Science Matrix at the University of California, Berkeley. Critical assistance for the project was administered by Eva Seto and Dasom Nah at the University of California, Berkeley, and Vatsal Naresh at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

Organized as a contemporary “pilgrimage” in Manhattan, the most recent iteration of the exhibition was on view simultaneously at The James Gallery at The Graduate Center of The City University of New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, and The New York Public Library. A look at the Holy Land as magnet of pilgrimage for the three monotheistic faiths was the focus of the installation at The New York Public Library. The Morgan Library & Museum brought an altogether different aspect of

the story of coexistence and collaboration between diverse cultures in a display of the celebrated Morgan Picture Bible, which offers exquisite thirteenth-century illustrations of the events of the Old Testament. An international team with various explorations and experiences in Mediterranean sanctuaries presented a medley of artifacts, contemporary art, multimedia, and photographs at The James Gallery.

We are grateful to Carnegie Corporation of New York, Achelis and Bodman Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation for Islamic Art's Building Bridges Program, Nicholas J. and Anna K. Bouras Foundation, Bertha and Isaac Liberman Foundation, Inc., in memory of Ruth and Seymour Klein, Henry Luce Foundation, and Stavros Niarchos Foundation for supporting the New York exhibitions. Furthermore, Aix-Marseille University, Idemec, Marco Maione (C-Album), The Morgan Library & Museum, Mucem, and The New York Public Library generously lent works that supplement our field research. We are also delighted that the artists Lino Mannocci, Cécile Massie, Andrea Merli, Ayşe Özalp, Guy Raivitz, Gildas Sergé, and Anna Marie Rockwell graciously contributed their thoughtful work to the exhibitions and this publication.

Shared Sacred Sites would not have been possible without the support of Chase Robinson, President of The Graduate Center of The City University of New York, Colin B. Bailey, Director of The Morgan Library & Museum, Anthony Marx, President of The New York Public Library.

The exhibition at The James Gallery was overseen by Keith Wilson, Director, The Center for the Humanities, and Katherine Carl, Curator, The James Gallery, and Deputy Director, The Center for the Humanities. We would like to thank the following individuals at The Graduate Center of The City University of New York, who provided incalculable support in the realization of this project: Sebastian Persico, Vice President for Finance, with the assistance of David Tse, Finance Manager, and Wei Zhang, Finance Specialist; Ray Bing and Chris Lowery, Exhibitions and Building Design; Sampson Starkweather, Publicity Coordinator, The Center for the Humanities; Vincent Brigante, Head of Engineering; Charles Scott, Director of Facilities; John Flaherty, Head of Security and Public Safety; Lauren Rosenblum, The James Gallery Fellow; Cara Jordan, Assistant to the Director, The Center for the Humanities; Karen Sander, Director of Public Programs; and gallery attendants Molly Bauer, Sonja Gandert, Kirsten Gill, Aleksei

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The New York Public Library team was open and welcoming as they contributed immensely to the realization of this project. William Kelly, Andrew W. Mellon Director of the Research Libraries, greeted our ideas from the start with enthusiasm and generosity. For unwavering dedication to the project, we would like to thank Declan Kiely, Director of Exhibitions, Susan Rabbiner, Assistant Director of Exhibitions, and Kailen Rogers, Curatorial Associate. The following staff also supplied insurmountable assistance in the realization of this exhibition: Andrew Pastore, Installation Coordinator, with assistance from art handlers Eric Doeringer, Todd Kelly, Thane Lund, and Diane Tenerelli; Myriam de Arteni, Exhibition Conservator, with help from Heather Hodge, Conservation Technician; Deborah Straussman, Head Registrar, and Caryn Gedell, Associate Registrar; Eric Shows, Digitization Services Manager; Aygul Malkeyeva, Metadata Specialist; Amy Geduldig, Senior Publicist; Carrie Welch, Chief External Relations Officer; Sara Lugo, Executive Assistant to the President, and Jocelyn Myara, Special Assistant to the President's Office; Kiowa Hammons, Rights Clearance Coordinator; Allie Werner, Manager, Foundations and Government Grants; and the photographers Martin Parsekian, Allie Smith, and Pete Riesett. The public programs at The New York Public Library were astutely directed by Fay Rosenfeld, Vice President, Public Programs, with the assistance of Emily Krell, Executive Producer, Public Programs, Arden Armbruster, Production Coordinator, Public Programs, Tali Stolzenberg-Myers, Associate Producer, Public Programs, and RaeLyn Grogan, Public Programs Department Coordinator.

The New York exhibitions were accompanied by a series of events that featured conversations, music, and workshops, highlighting the essence of these shared cultural experiences. The exhibition opened at The James Gallery with a harmonious musical presentation by Yinon Muallem, titled "Meeting of the Hearts," blending discussion, sound, and composition to connect different religions and cultures. We would also like to thank Cheikh Khaled Bentounès, Rabbi Rolando Matalon, and minister and theologian Cláudio Carvalhaes for an insightful conversation on the issues of mutual tolerance and the universal understandings of hospitality emanating from the tradition of Abraham, which was moderated by journalist Anisa Mehdi, Executive Director, Abraham's Path Initiative at The New York Public Library. A daylong workshop at The Graduate Center continued the conversations about pluralism and coexistence. The forum would not have been fruitful without invaluable input from musician Yinon Muallem and historians and social scientists Anna Bigelow, North Carolina State University, Aomar Boum, University of California, Los Angeles, Glenn Bowman, University of Kent, Jon Butler, Yale University, David Campbell, Notre Dame University, Nancy Foner, Hunter College and The Graduate Center of The City University of New York, Jonathan Sheehan, University of California, Berkeley, and Winnifred Sullivan, Indiana University.

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Karen Barkey, Dionigi Albera, and Manoël Pénicaud
Curators of *Shared Sacred Sites*



Manoël Pénicaud,
*Pilgrims at the Tomb of Mary
on Her Dormition Day,
Jerusalem, 2015 (detail)*

Sharing Holy Places across the Mediterranean World

Dionigi Albera, Karen Barkey, and Manoël Pénicaud

There could be no better illustration of coexistence than the extensive history of religious sites shared by members of different beliefs and backgrounds. Chronicles of the three Abrahamic religions are full of examples of cohabitation, hospitality, and tolerance despite a world torn apart by cultural, ethnic, and spiritual struggles. Maps of the Mediterranean and Near East are strewn with shrines that have long been the sites of convergence for prayers, wishes, and contemplation, yet their origins of sharing differ. Often local populations perceive a benefit of another group's sacred space, either recognized by open-minded leaders who preach unity or by members of different religious groups who share said space for pragmatic reasons. Our contemporary world contains numerous cases of such crossings, many of which are documented in this catalogue.

Published in conjunction with the exhibition *Shared Sacred Sites* in New York City, this book explores a cultural journey with the intent to produce an alternative narrative to a divided world, rather than present a scholarly analysis of why and how people share religious places. The essays in this catalogue offer compelling stories of Christians, Jews, and Muslims, in pairs or all together, joined in prayer, supplication, and expectation. These are the accounts that we record through prayer, sound, voice, and vision. Following the path of the New York exhibition, this publication aims to challenge contemporary public discourse on estrangement, separation, and the religious hatred of the other.

Sacred sites that are shared by two or more groups have historically been a source of intellectual and scholarly curiosity. The sharing of spaces, holy figures, and symbols by multiple religious communities demonstrates the practical choreographies and social possibilities of cooperation between potentially antagonistic groups. The study of such communal practices provides key insights into characteristics and features crucial to the cultivation of tolerance and understanding. Art historians¹ and social scientists² have observed this phenomenon for some time as it represents a partial solution to the problems of coexistence. Concentrating on the different aspects of the choreographies of sharing a space, social scientists have examined the way that people arrange themselves in space and time, whereas art historians have emphasized the spatial and aesthetic dimensions of these interactions. When conflict infringes on coexistence (as in the case of many sacred spaces of the Holy Land), scholars have attempted to understand the motives behind the interruption. They have overwhelmingly found that such interruptions are caused when public authorities intervene, such as religious leaders who want to maintain orthodoxy and monoreligious spaces, or political leaders who use sacred spaces and religion as part of their toolkit to control and increase their power.³ Often, left to their own devices, the faithful of different religions who appreciate the precariousness of the sharing, have worked to maintain and resist interference. This book and its eponymous exhibition together present a sketch of historical and contemporary expressions of sharing.

¹ Paolo Girardelli, "Architecture, Identity, and Liminality: On the Use and Meaning of Catholic Spaces in Late Ottoman Istanbul," *Muqarna* 22 (2005), pp. 233–64, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25482430>; Eleni Barmparitsa, et al., "From Mosque to Church and Back Again: Investigating a House of Faith in Post-Medieval Pylos," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 84, no. 4 (2015), pp. 771–856, <https://doi.org/10.2972/hesperia.84.4.0771>; Nayanjot Lahiri, "Archaeological Landscapes and Textual Images: A Study of the Sacred Geography of Late Medieval Ballabgarh," *World Archaeology* 28, no. 2 (1996), pp. 244–64, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/125074>; Paolo Maggiolini, "Christian Churches and Arab Christians in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan: Citizenship, Ecclesiastical Identity and Roles in the Jordanian Political Field," *Archives De Sciences Sociales Des Religions* 60, no. 171 (2015), pp. 37–58, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24740948>.

² See Dionigi Albera and Maria Couroucli, eds., *Sharing Sacred Spaces in the Mediterranean: Christians, Muslims, and Jews at Shrines and Sanctuaries* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2012); Dionigi Albera and Manoël Pénicaud, eds., *Coexistences: Lieux saints partagés en Europe et en Méditerranée* (Arles, France: Actes Sud; Paris: Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration, 2017); Elazar Barkan and Karen Barkey, eds., *Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites: Religion, Politics, and Conflict Resolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); Anna Bigelow, ed., *Sharing the Sacred: Practicing Pluralism in Muslim North India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Glenn W. Bowman, ed., *Sharing the Sacra: The Politics and Pragmatics of Intercommunal Relations around Holy Places* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012); and Angela Hobart and Thierry Zarcone, eds., *Pilgrimages and Ambiguity: Sharing the Sacred* (London: Sean Kingston Publishing, 2017).

³ Barkan and Barkey, *Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites*.

Defining Sacred Sites

A closer exploration of the choreographies of sharing will be done in the contributions to this catalogue. However, it might be useful to provide a terminological and conceptual discussion for a better apprehension of the configuration referred to as "shared sacred sites." Religious representations and practices are often inscribed in demarcated and specialized spaces. In other terms, they are "situated." The designation of "sacred site," in a very broad sense, can be reserved for any space that is the support of religious veneration, and is specialized in communication with supernatural entities. In these sites rituals are performed, professional mediators operate, and objects exist that facilitate this contact.

Within this immense spiritual geography, it is possible to isolate two major polarities, at least in the context of the monotheistic religions, by distinguishing between "places of worship" and "holy places." The first polarity includes sites—like the synagogue, the parish church, and the mosque—that host routine devotions. Here the local community of believers regularly meets and receives the instructions of the specialists. In fact, the terms "synagogue" and "church" originally meant "assembly," and the Arabic term "jami," designating the mosque where the Friday prayer is held, comes from a root that has the meaning of "gathering." These places are endowed with a sacredness, which is reinforced by the architecture, the presence of liturgical objects, the actions of specialized personnel, the ritual practices that are performed, and the precautions related to the purity of those who access them and to the behaviors that are banned. Generally, the sacredness of these places of worship is, so to speak, of lower intensity.

The second polarity includes the sites whose attendance does not follow the routine obligations that the religious institution strives to impose on its believers. Here the faithful's presence is freer, discontinuous, and more responsive to individual intentions. In these holy places the active charisma of supernatural powers is stronger and more perceptible. In general, the aura of holy places is linked to the action of a holy figure who "inhabits" this space. This magnetic presence is often based on miraculous events, and on the material traces of his/her passage (tomb, cenotaph, direct or indirect relics).⁴ In other terms, the sacredness of these sites has a higher intensity and, in addition to architectural and ritual aspects, it is also reinforced by significant elements of the landscape (caves, springs, rocks, mountains, trees, ruins). The efficacy sought by the believer in the holy place is, moreover, corroborated by the veneration of this place in the past and in the present. The typical action of the faithful in relation to the holy places is the pilgrimage, whether this is individual or collective, over a long distance or within proximity.

Places of worship generally tend to be monoreligious. Their vocation as centers of convergence for a local community of believers is what drives this direction, not to mention that they are generally

⁴ James J. Preston, "Spiritual Magnetism: An Organizing Principle for the Study of Pilgrimage," in *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, ed. Alan Morinis (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1992), pp. 32–46.



Andrea Merli, *Inside the Cave of the Patriarchs Mosque in Hebron/Al-Khalil, Hebron, West Bank, 2012*

placed under the close control of religious and/or institutional hierarchy. The act of sharing typically occurs in moments of crisis or transition, as when, in the Umayyad period, Muslims performed their prayers in churches due to the lack of mosques. In some European countries in recent years, priests have given Muslim immigrants the use of a portion of the church for collective prayer. While quite exceptional in everyday places of worship, the act of sharing is better acclimatized in the holy places. Of course, the latter cover a wide range of situations. The manifestations of sharing differ if they are concerned, on the one hand, with paramount sacred sites that are deeply related to events and figures at the heart of a religious tradition, and endowed with immense and persistent influence, or, on the other hand, with peripheral sites that are associated with the presence of local, evanescent, and sometimes rather anonymous holy figures.

Sharing Sacred Sites

There are various nuances of meaning covered by the expression “shared,” and several of them reverberate in beliefs and practices associated with sacred sites. First, to “share” may mean “to have or use something at the same time as someone else,”⁵ “to partake of, use, experience, occupy, or enjoy with others.”⁶ But to share may also mean “to divide and distribute in shares.”⁷ These two modalities

⁵ Cambridge Dictionary, s.v. “share (v),” <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/share>.

⁶ Merriam-Webster, s.v. “share (v),” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/share>.

⁷ Ibid.

are present in the sacred sites, which may be “shared with” faithful of a different religion but also “shared out” among religious corporations. Obviously these two tendencies may at times intermingle. To fully grasp the main characters of these phenomena, two other dimensions must be carefully distinguished: attendance and control. The interplay between these two variables determines a plurality of situations, corresponding to as many equilibrium points, sometimes ephemeral, sometimes inscribed in the duration. Consequently, the meaning of sharing may be variable according to the context.

When various religious groups have claims on the same site, generally because of its central importance from a symbolic or political point of view, and want to exert formal rights on it, the holy place is sometimes “shared out” among them. This means that the interior space is divided in “shares,” and the portion allotted to each group is rigidly controlled and defended from the infiltration of other religious organizations. In these cases, the dimension of the control is essential, and it is possible to see manifestations of what may be defined as a competitive sharing.⁸ The division of the site often becomes both unavoidable and tantalizing, and frequently generates subsequent instances of antagonisms, competitions, and even fights. Such a situation may be observed at the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, and at the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem, which are both characterized by a tense partition between different Christian denominations over centuries. There, only strict respect for the status quo, dating back to rules enacted during the Ottoman period, allows for the continuance of a fragile cohabitation. Another significant example of division of a holy place is that of the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, which is claimed by all Abrahamic posterity, segmented into the three monotheistic religions. After 1967 the building was divided into two parts—one for Muslims, the other for Jews. Frictions and tensions have accompanied the partition of this holy place, culminating in the 1994 massacre of twenty-nine Muslims committed by a Jewish terrorist. After this tragic event, the division became even more rigid, with a complete separation of the respective spaces.

Split control may be combined with the partially common use of the entire space by faithful of different religions and denominations. This is evident at the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem as well as in the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem, where all Christian denominations may circulate and pray freely inside the entire sacred site. Moreover, these shrines are also freely frequented by Muslim faithful. In the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, Jews and Muslims dispose of two distinct entries and are confined to the respective shares of the internal space, which are impermeably and mutually closed. Only non-Palestinian Christians may circulate freely in both sections. In this way, Jewish and Muslim sectors are shared with Christians, even if no specific symbolic infrastructure is provided to support their prayers.

⁸ Robert Hayden, “Antagonistic Tolerance: Competitive Sharing of Religious Sites in South Asia and the Balkans,” *Current Anthropology* 43, no. 2 (April 2002), pp. 205–31. <https://doi.org/10.1086/338303>.

Another dimension of control could be defined as “longitudinal sharing,” when different religious groups use the same sacred site at different times. For instance, each year the Cave of the Patriarchs is attributed for ten days in its entirety respectively to Jews and to Muslims, to celebrate their main feasts. On Ascension Day in Jerusalem, Christians are permitted to hold celebrations in the compound of the Dome of Ascension, which has been a mosque since Saladin. Once a year, on June 14, the Carmelites hold mass inside Elijah’s cave, known as the “School of the Prophets,” which was transformed into a synagogue in 1948.

The discussion of shared control of the shrines should not discourage us from a consideration of practices, feelings, and discourses generally linked to joint worship, since this is a widespread phenomenon that goes well beyond the competition for the administration of the shrines. In other words, the “political” dimension should not obscure the “religious” aspect. The multireligious attendance at the same sacred site can be relatively independent of the control of the shrine (or of a share of this). As a matter of fact, when there are no relevant concerns related to the jurisdiction of a holy place (because the latter is marginal, or its management is clearly monopolized by a single religious group), multireligious attendance may occur and the site can even be more easily “shared with” faithful of different religions.

The issue of control is particularly sensitive in the Holy Land, where the boundaries between religions are overdetermined by the symbolic centrality of the shrines and by contemporary political struggles. However, the sharing of holy places between monotheistic religions is not an idiosyncrasy specific to this crossroads of the thousand-years-old chronologies of monotheisms. On the contrary, it is a phenomenon disseminated in the whole Mediterranean, with multiple occurrences, yesterday as well as today. Cross-religious interweaving seems to find fertile ground where religious and political issues are less important, and clerical apparatuses of control less rigid. The religious landscape of the Inland Sea has been marked by a long-term proliferation of forms of interfaith convergence, which are generally more relaxed and freer to express themselves than in the Holy Land.

Common Elements

This widespread joint attendance is related to another meaning of the expression “to share,” which may also designate the possession of common characteristics. From this point of view, it is possible to isolate at least three aspects that are “shared” by Christians, Jews, and Muslims. The first dimension addresses hopes and demands that often accompany the visits at sacred sites. People of different religions converge in the same holy place because they are animated by a common quest for supernatural help. What is shared, in this case, is a common human condition, with its fragility and its contradictions, as well as the tendency to seek comfort by visiting a sacred site and looking here for

the help of a holy being that functions as a kind of intermediary between the human sphere and the divine one. In the three monotheistic religions, the saints fulfill the same thaumaturgical functions, and the mediation of these more concrete intercessors remedies to some extent to the distance of God. Thus, when a saint has a reputation for efficiency, in conjunction with a shrine where his/her power manifests itself with strength, even believers of another religion can cross the border and seek the protection of that saint and visit the holy place so powerfully inhabited by his/her charisma.

The second dimension pertains to several figures and timelines that overlap within the theological traditions of the three religions of the Book. Despite crucial differences at this level, these traditions also share several aspects, in terms of beliefs, episodes, and relevant figures that are sanctioned by the sacred texts. Some biblical patriarchs, prophets, and kings are the most obvious references for worship shared by monotheistic religions. Their traces materialize in some sanctuaries where sometimes the followers of the three religions converge. As we have already seen, a holy place linked to a Biblical figure like Abraham nowadays crystallizes sharp confrontations for its control (and the same could be said for David’s and Rachel’s shrines in the same region). Among the saints who act as bridges between religions, Mary has perhaps the dominant role. This figure has a very important place in the Qur’an, and many Marian sanctuaries attract a Muslim clientele. Indeed, for Muslims, this devotion may seem somewhat legitimate because of this partial theological continuity with Christianity. Other shared saints, like Saint John the Baptist (*Yahyâ* in Islam), or common narrative cycles, such as the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus (*Ahl al-Kahf*, “People of the Cave”), can also be a link between Christian and Muslim traditions, and a support for converging devotional practices. A central point of encounter between Christianity and Islam (and partly also with Judaism), whose importance is comparable to that of the Virgin, is represented by a largely interchangeable figure of the Qur’an, whose biographical contours are quite evanescent: *al-Khidr*, the “Green” (also known as *Khidr*, *Khadir*, *Hadir*, *Hızır*, etc.). This protean being has often been associated or identified with Elijah and Saint George (but also with Saint Sergius).

The third dimension covers what we could call devotional continuity, which rests beneath doctrinal and institutional discontinuity between religions. Overall, mixed frequentation activates a shared devotional lexicon. In monotheistic religions, many vernacular practices present significant convergences—for instance regarding devotional itineraries, hagiographic qualities of saints, or acts which express the faith. Devotional gestures performed by Christians, Jews, or Muslims at shrines often resemble each other through a shared repertoire of concrete and tactile piety, which is part of a basic vocabulary, largely transversal, and often condemned or simply tolerated by the respective religious authorities. This may involve using candles, incubation,



• Les Sept-Saints

FRANCE

• Aiguebelle

MACEDONIA

• Makedonski Brod

• Asprogia

• Thessaloniki

• Istanbul

• Büyükada

GREECE

• Ephesus

TURKEY

• Soğanlı

• Afşin

• Tarsus

• Chania

TUNISIA

• Lampedusa

• Djerba

• Chenini

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

SYRIA

• Deir Mar Mûsa

• Harissa

• Beirut

• Damascus

LEBANON

• Haifa

• Nazareth

ISRAEL

• Lod

• Hebron

• Jerusalem

• Bethlehem

MOROCCO

• Sefrou

• Essaouira

Sites Presented
in the Exhibition

• Cairo

EGYPT

• Mount Sinai

making offerings of money, tying ribbons or strips of cloth to trees or grids that protect the tomb of a saint, leaving prayer intentions near holy places, rubbing coins against walls or touching objects that have healing powers (such as the tomb of a saint), slipping through chains, taking home pieces of cotton soaked in oil, or touching or drinking the water of holy springs. This common lexicon may easily be adapted to a foreign religious context. Quite often it may also be enriched by exporting some ritual practices that are part of the official grammar of the faithful's own religion, or on the contrary by imitating some acts that are typical of the host sanctuary's religion. Thus, to give only an example, it is possible to see Muslims reciting Qur'anic verses at a Christian shrine, or addressing their prayers to an icon or a statue in the same space.

Hospitality of the Religious “Other”

The hospitality of the religious “other” is a common denominator of the shared holy places phenomenon. Indeed, in most cases presented in the exhibition and in the catalogue, the presence of believers of a different religion is relatively tolerated or even fully accepted by other pilgrims and the administrators of a sanctuary. These practices are even frequent enough that nobody asks a visitor what his or her religion is.

Hospitality is a central spiritual theme in the three monotheisms, the root of which goes back to the common ancestor, Abraham. In a crucial episode related both in the Bible and the Qur'an, Abraham is said to have hosted with open arms three mysterious visitors, inviting them for a meal under the oak of Mamre where he lived. Often considered angels, one of these strangers sent by God promised him that his wife, Sarah, would have a child, Isaac, despite her great age. This founding episode of the monotheisms recommends the unconditional acceptance of the other, of the foreigner (*peregrinus* in Latin).

The etymology of “hospitality” is also highly significant because the word stems from *hospes* (“the one who receives the other”), and beyond, from the verb *hostire* (“to treat as equals”). But the word *hostis* (“the enemy”) has the same roots, which suggests that hospitality can also be related to hostility. Then we see the two polarities of the relation to religious otherness: interreligious hospitality or hostility. Given historical and geopolitical contexts, these two modes are clearly at work in shared sacred sites. But even if these opposite attitudes seem crystallized in such places, they are not fixed and sacred sites may oscillate in time between these two poles.

A Journey across the Mediterranean

The exhibition and this catalogue invite the visitor to a journey through space, from the Holy Land to other shores of the Mediterranean, also proposing some stops on islands such as Büyükada, Crete, and Djerba. It is also a journey across time. Several magnificent objects, a few of which date back to the Middle Ages, capture the symbolic and iconographic elements shared by the three monotheistic religions. Furthermore, it is

possible to discover, by revisiting routes explored by the pilgrims of the past, some holy places marked for a long time by a multireligious attendance. The journey continues through to present time, illustrating the results of direct surveys carried out for the preparation of this exhibition. Some objects embody contemporary devotions, and films and photographs allow discovery of today's practices inside several shared sites. Also incorporated is the gaze of contemporary artists, who offer a reflection on these joint expressions of piety.

We approach this project with a broad perspective that reveals the extraordinary dissemination and continuity of these manifestations. The quantitative importance of these phenomena is far from negligible: joint frequentations of a shrine by faithful of more than one religion are often embedded in local settings and landscapes, but are not just local idiosyncrasies. An important source of inspiration from this point of view is the pioneer work done by Frederick William Hasluck almost a century ago on relations between Christians and Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. With great erudition, Hasluck collected hundreds of examples of multireligious attendance at the same shrine from a period spanning several centuries. Christians and Muslims were ready to address their requests to shrines administered by the other religion if they had a reputation for being efficacious.⁹ Indeed, according to Hasluck, in his days these crossovers were still a common, almost banal phenomenon.¹⁰

A general long-term overview shows an imbalance in the distribution in space and time of these phenomena throughout the Mediterranean. Mixed devotional practices are well-established and recurring in the Eastern and Southern sectors, and the area has retained a kaleidoscope of peoples and religions. The dismantling of the Byzantine Empire's eastern frontiers was for a long time characterized by a certain intermingling with Muslims populations. The various Muslim dynasties that ruled the territories they had seized from the empire—the Abbasids, Ayyubids, Mamluks, Seljuks, Ottomans—did not make them religiously homogeneous. There were of course periods of repression and forced conversions, but on the whole Christian and Jewish minorities (*dhimmi*) living under Muslim rule were granted protected status for centuries.

In the past, the procedures of religious tolerance were usually more active and effective on the Muslim side. Christian minorities survived centuries under the Sultans, resulting in a religious variety that still exists today. In turn, this situation has been the background of forms of interfaith interlocking. Certainly, the status of *dhimmi* was not enviable, especially if it is considered through modern parameters, but the possibility of worship and some basic freedoms have been habitually guaranteed. In general, Christian countries have long been less open to the presence of other religions and in Western Europe interfaith confrontation has often been marked by the expulsion of the other. This situation has changed in a context marked by modern

⁹ Frederick William Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2000), p. 100. Originally published by Oxford at the Clarendon Press in 1929.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

ideas of tolerance, especially when, during the twentieth century, there was a considerable implementation of Muslim population in Europe. In this landscape, which has become plural, it is now possible to see, for example, some cases of Muslim attendance at Christian places of worship.

The clashes of modern bellicose nationalisms, however, has changed the ethnic and religious profile of broad sectors of the eastern and southern Mediterranean, which has sparked a process of homogenization that put an end to centuries of coexistence. The human landscape of the region has been profoundly modified by the two Balkan wars (1912 and 1913), World War I (1914–18), the war between Greece and Turkey (1919–22), and World War II (1939–45), which resulted in evacuations, deportations, killings, and other forced departures. The creation of the state of Israel in 1948 also had a major impact in the ethno-religious homogenization of the region and its polarization around religious identities. The decolonization process in the Arab countries—which won their independence from the European powers that had, in most cases, taken the place of the Ottoman Empire—in its turn further altered local populations. The construction of a religious-based nationalism led to a new rigidity, accompanied by the development of fundamentalist tendencies influenced by *salafiyya* and by Wahhabism. The religious landscape was affected by the exodus of almost all Jews and most of the European population from North Africa. In the 1970s, the fighting in Cyprus led to a divorce between Christian and Muslim populations that had previously lived side by side. A few years later, the war in Lebanon exacerbated the differences between the many confessional groups, which had previously coexisted in the country. The wars that raged in the former Yugoslavia throughout the 1990s led to more forced displacements, and recent years have seen the tragic conflicts in Iraq and Syria, with the bloody religious “cleansing” performed with terrible violence by ISIS. Yet the powerful drive to homogenize territories and to polarize identities has not destroyed local specificities, and even now there is still room for interfaith convergences, as our exhibition illustrates.

Taken together, these mixed devotional manifestations belie the tightness often attributed to monotheisms. Where people of different religions coexist, one observes a regular implantation of forms of shared worship. And when the political and social conditions are favorable, this sharing is peaceful. This implies that the logic of the conflict and of the construction of difference, which in turn is undoubtedly real and has often been dominant, does not represent the exclusive tonality of the relations between the monotheistic religions. This involves the necessity to conceive differently the interactions between those entities that are defined as civilizations. Even in what is often seen as their most intransigent constituent—the behavior related to religion—civilizations appear contradictory and inhabited by diversity. In everyday life, religious identities may be composite, and religious practices sometimes indeterminate.



Guy Raivitz, *Alight by Visitors, Remembrance Candles Burn outside of Elijah's Cave, Haifa, Israel, 2017*

An International Project

Based on years of anthropological and historical research, the multifaceted *Shared Sacred Sites* project is characterized by the rewriting of each iteration of the exhibition. Indeed, the global topic remains the same, but form, content, and context change from one moment or location to another.



Marseille, France

The original project, titled *Lieux saints partagés*, was presented in 2015 at the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations in Marseille, France. Just after the January terrorist attacks at the *Charlie Hebdo* offices and the Kosher supermarket in Paris, the exhibition provided keys to understanding religious issues in the Mediterranean and drew more than 120,000 people in four months.¹¹



Tunis, Tunisia

The exhibition then traveled to the National Bardo Museum in Tunis, where it featured magnificent archaeological Tunisian collections from November 2016 to February 2017. Placed under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Tunisia, Beji Caid Essebsi, this new version of *Shared Sacred Sites* was a symbolic response to the tragic terrorist attack perpetrated in the museum in March 2015.



Thessaloniki, Greece

From September 2017 to February 2018, another version focused on the Balkans was held at three museums in Thessaloniki, Greece: the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, the Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, and Yeni Cami (the former Archaeological Museum). Thessaloniki is ideally positioned to tell the story of sharing the sacred, not only because the three monotheistic religions have historically flourished here, but also because the city finds itself at the Mediterranean crossroads of migration today. This iteration of the project was supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.



Paris, France

In parallel, the exhibition was also adapted in Paris and presented at the National Museum of the Immigration History from October 2017 to January 2018. Placed under the patronage of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, this other version of the project included more migratory-related cases and contemporary interreligious initiatives, including architectural examples like the work of Le Corbusier or the Berlin-based multifaith center of worship—House of One.¹²



Marrakesh, Morocco

Then from December 2017 to May 2018, the most recent version of the project was organized for the opening of Dar El-Bacha-Museum of Confluences in the old city of Marrakesh, Morocco, in the former Dar El-Bacha palace. Mixing Moroccan and international collections, the exhibition valorized the richness of North Africa in terms of shared and everyday life interactions.

¹¹ Dionigi Albera, Isabelle Marquette, and Manoël Pénicaud, eds., *Lieux saints partagés* (Arles, France: Actes Sud; Marseille, France: Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée, 2015).

¹² Albera and Pénicaud, *Coexistences*.

A Contemporary Pilgrimage in Manhattan



Opening at **The New York Public Library** with the history of the Holy Land, the New York iteration of the project began with a look at Jerusalem as both holy city and center of pilgrimage for three faiths. An examination of Abraham's vision of hospitality set the stage for extending forbearance to the stranger and the unfamiliar. This mythical episode—present both in the Bible and the Qur'an—was also key to the New Testament command, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it."¹³ The exhibition then shifted to Moses, who engendered a common veneration at Mount Sinai in Egypt, followed by the Saint Catherine monastery, which was a stop for many Muslim pilgrims traveling to Mecca since the premodern area. Many of them visited the top of the mountain where there is still a mosque and



a church. Mary has also been pivotal to the narratives that bind Christianity and Islam, as if encouraging the bridge between these religions through her shared sanctity. To complete a panoptic vision of shared holy figures, other characters are depicted and presented such as Elijah/al-Khidr at Mount Carmel, the Seven Sleepers, John the Baptist, and Saint Georges.

The Morgan Library & Museum brought an altogether different aspect of the story of coexistence and collaboration between diverse cultures in a display of the celebrated Morgan Picture Bible produced in Paris around 1250, which offered the most exquisite visualizations of the events of the Old Testament. With the passing of time and distance, the manuscript acquired inscriptions in Latin, Persian, and Judeo-Persian. The Bible beautifully displays contact between



civilizations and a deep respect for shared heritage.

Finally, **The Graduate Center of The City University of New York** gathered contemporary examples compiled by an international team with various explorations and experiences in sanctuaries, presenting a medley of artifacts, contemporary art, multimedia, and photographs. Some of us have grown up near these shared sacred sites and have been attracted by their lore; others have made a career of studying through ethnographic investigation and visual techniques the traditions of the faithful. Visitors of the exhibition and readers of the catalogue may discover contemporary situations in the cities of Bethlehem, Djerba, Ephesus, Haifa, Hebron, Istanbul, and more, as well as portraits of some interfaith bridges builders.

New York offers an extraordinary laboratory from where to diffuse these enlightened narratives of history, forbearance, and accommodation among peoples of disparate cultures. New York itself is one of the most successful examples of the mixing of populations. It is a hub for new ideas, a center from where portals to the world carry out the news of triumphs and failures, of experiments deemed worthy of imitation. It is here that we believe our ideas will get churned, digested, and carried out beyond our reach. This city gives us the opportunity to build our concept, based on an itinerary through three venues as a way of bringing together different prestigious New York institutions that will engage with the project and synergistically build the exhibition's narrative. It is through this city—an example of coexistence of cultures—that we would like to address the new old stories of religious tolerance and sharing.

13 Heb. 13:2.

PART 1

A Journey to the Holy
Land: Common Figures,
Shared Places, and
Long-Term Antagonism

Shared Sacred Sites at The New York Public Library

The notion of the sacred journey has long been a feature of many religions. Over five hundred years ago, when Bernhard von Breydenbach (1440–1497), a German nobleman and dean of the cathedral at Mainz, sailed from Venice to the port of Jaffa in April 1483, he was following a well-traveled route. By the fourth century AD, pilgrimages to the Holy Land had become a recognized expression of Christian piety. Devotional and exploratory journeys such as these would have an ongoing impact on the development of Western European art, architecture, and publishing through the fifteenth century and beyond.

The book that records Breydenbach's travels, *Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam* (Journey to the Holy Land, see pp. 46–47), incorporated innovative, highly detailed, foldout plates by Breydenbach's fellow traveler, the Dutch artist Erhard Reuwich, and marked a revolutionary development in the history of printing. The *Peregrinatio* is, in essence, the first illustrated travel book ever printed, the incunable period's equivalent of today's Lonely Planet guides or TripAdvisor.

Reuwich's hand-colored plates, considered to be the earliest authentic printed town views—again, one is prompted to consider the early ancestry of Google Street View—along with Breydenbach's personal account of the people and places they encountered during their six-month adventure, proved widely influential. After the publication of the first three editions of the book in Mainz, between 1486 and 1488, the book's maps and views, printed from identical woodblocks, eventually traversed the entire continent of Europe as eleven further editions in six languages appeared between 1486 and 1505.

One of Reuwich's foldout panoramic maps is regarded as the first topographically accurate view of Jerusalem and its shared sacred sites. The interaction of the book's images and text—its firsthand account hewn from the experience of a journey motivated by a combination of curiosity and a search for personal salvation—manifests a giant leap forward in the visual representation of the Holy Land.

While admittedly presenting a predominantly Christian view of the city, and based firmly upon a crusading agenda, the map's inclusion of groups of figures gathered around its various places of worship—Jewish, Christian, and Islamic—is a salutary reminder that while organized religions can sometimes be regarded as monolithic, their origins lie in individual human experience. This is communicated across generations through masterworks of human creativity, books

such as the *Peregrinatio*, and the extraordinary range of achievement represented by the works on view in *Shared Sacred Sites*.

The exhibition in the Library's Wachenheim Gallery was arranged in six sections. Beginning with a section focusing on Jerusalem—the quintessential holy city and shared sacred site revered by Jews, Christians, and Muslims—the exhibition encompassed the figure of Abraham, the progenitor of the three monotheistic faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—and the major figures central to the Torah, the Bible, and the Qur'an that have inspired interfaith encounters. The exhibition's other sections were devoted to the shared figures of Moses, Mary, and Jesus, and the worship they have inspired, as well as Adam and Eve, Elijah, Khidr, Saint George, and the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. In each of these sections the visitor is introduced to the beliefs, rites, and stories that the three religions have in common.

Drawn exclusively from several of the Library's special collections includes early printed books, illuminated manuscripts, vintage photographs, and prints, this exhibition represented the numerous ways in which the shared sacred places of the Holy Land have compelled the attention of artists, explorers, linguists, photographers, and writers. The works on view in these sections were also a vivid testament to the fascination that the Holy Land has inspired and continues to inspire.

Shared Sacred Sites, a multi-venue exhibition hosted by three of New York City's major cultural institutions, invited visitors to undertake their own contemporary pilgrimage—or secular peregrination—to discover the cultural history of successive European encounters with the Holy Land, and the possibilities inherent in the historical sharing of its sacred sites. It is our hope that the selection of works presented by the Library emphasized our common humanity, and the indispensable values of tolerance and respect, which are the chief lessons of this exhibition.

William P. Kelly
Andrew W. Mellon Director of Research Libraries
The New York Public Library



Wenceslas Hollar,
View of Jerusalem, 1660
(detail, see p. 38)

Shared Sacred Sites in the Pre-Modern Holy Land

Nimrod Luz

What Is the Holy Land?

The Holy Land is first and foremost an ideological and eschatological term rather than a concrete geographical region. The sacred origins of this land are present in the Old Testament: “And the LORD shall inherit Judah as His portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.”¹ According to Jewish texts, אֶרֶץ הַקֹּדֶשׁ (Eretz HaKodesh, i.e. the holy land) was promised to Abraham as part of his covenant with God: “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates.”² This obscure geographical description indicates that the idea of the sacred quality of this place is more important than a concretely bounded region. The sanctity bestowed by God on this land—which at its center stood the holy city of Jerusalem and the most revered Jewish Temple Mount—was an idea so

¹ Zecharia, 2:16.

² Genesis, 15:18.

overpowering in Jewish theology that it survived thousands of years of exile.

In Christianity the holiness of the region, known in the Latin as Terra Sancta, became paramount following a long and tumultuous theological path. The ultimate importance of the land and its sacred sites for the Christian faith is epitomized by the declaration of the fourth-century theologian Saint Jerome, stipulating that: “the whole mystery of our faith is native to this country and this city.”³ Indeed, it is in this very landscape that pilgrims traveled to find the cave where Jesus was born, locations of his miraculous deeds, and the last eventful week before the crucifixion and resurrection in Jerusalem. These sacred places gave tangible identity and confirmation to events reported in the New Testament, which ultimately transformed the land of Terra Sancta and Jerusalem into the city of the Christian God.

Like its monotheistic predecessors, Islam also harbors deep respect for this sacred land. The Qur’an echoes the statement made by Moses to the Children of Israel: “O my people, enter the Holy Land which Allah has assigned to you.”⁴ The Arabic phrase *الأرض المقدسة* (Al-Arḍ Al-Muqaddasah, i.e. the blessed/sacred land) is quite common in ancient Muslim literature, although it was later dropped and replaced by the term *al-Sham* (greater Syria).⁵ The area was greatly venerated by Muslim mystics who frequented it in their spiritual search, but it also served as a desired location for rulers, religious intellectuals, and pilgrims to demonstrate Islamic piety.

Located between the Mediterranean Sea and the eastern shore of the Jordan River, the Holy Land presently encompasses modern-day Israel, Palestinian territories, Lebanon, western Jordan, and southwestern Syria. Considered holy by all three Abrahamic religions and synonymous with the biblical land of Israel and historical Palestine, the sacred geography of the Holy Land has at times been shared and at others contested.

Jerusalem and Its Holy Mountains

The most important Jewish temple was constructed on what is considered to be the most holy mountain associated with the dramatic events of the Sacrifice of Isaac. A well-known Jewish midrash describes the spheres of sanctity in the world as circles around the Foundation Stone on Temple Mount in Jerusalem:

As the navel is set in the center of the human body, so is the land of Israel the navel of the world . . . situated in the center of the world, and Jerusalem in the center of the land of Israel, and the sanctuary in the center of Jerusalem, and the holy place in the center of the sanctuary, and the ark in the center of the holy place, and the Foundation Stone before the holy place, because from it the world was founded.⁶

This perception is followed by various interpretations in later Islamic and Christian traditions. While ultimately accepting the religious status of Jerusalem, Christianity distanced itself from the Jewish religious center. An alternative sacred mountain in Jerusalem was named in the fourth century with the construction of the mother of all churches: the Holy Sepulcher.⁷

When Muslims arrived in Jerusalem in the seventh century, they adopted and followed Jewish traditions concerning the holiness assigned to the place, as may be inferred by the name commonly used at the time—*Bayt al-Maqdis*, also known as Temple Mount. Furthermore, they built the al-Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock, which transformed the mountain again into the most revered and central site in the city. As described by an eighth-century Muslim scholar:

The holiness of the land of al-Sham is Palestine. And the holiness of Palestine is Jerusalem. And the holiness of Jerusalem is the mosque and holiness of the mosque is its dome.⁸

The two architectural gems still dominate Jerusalem’s landscape today.

Following this unique chain of events driven by the city’s importance to all three religions, a viable *modus vivendi* emerged, wherein each faith worshiped in its own sacred center. Although there were volatile eruptions of interfaith rivalry, the city generally accommodates believers of different faiths and denominations. As will be narrated henceforth, some of these sites were shared, and traditions were seldom endemic to but one of the acting faiths in the city.



Wenceslas Hollar,
View of Jerusalem, 1660

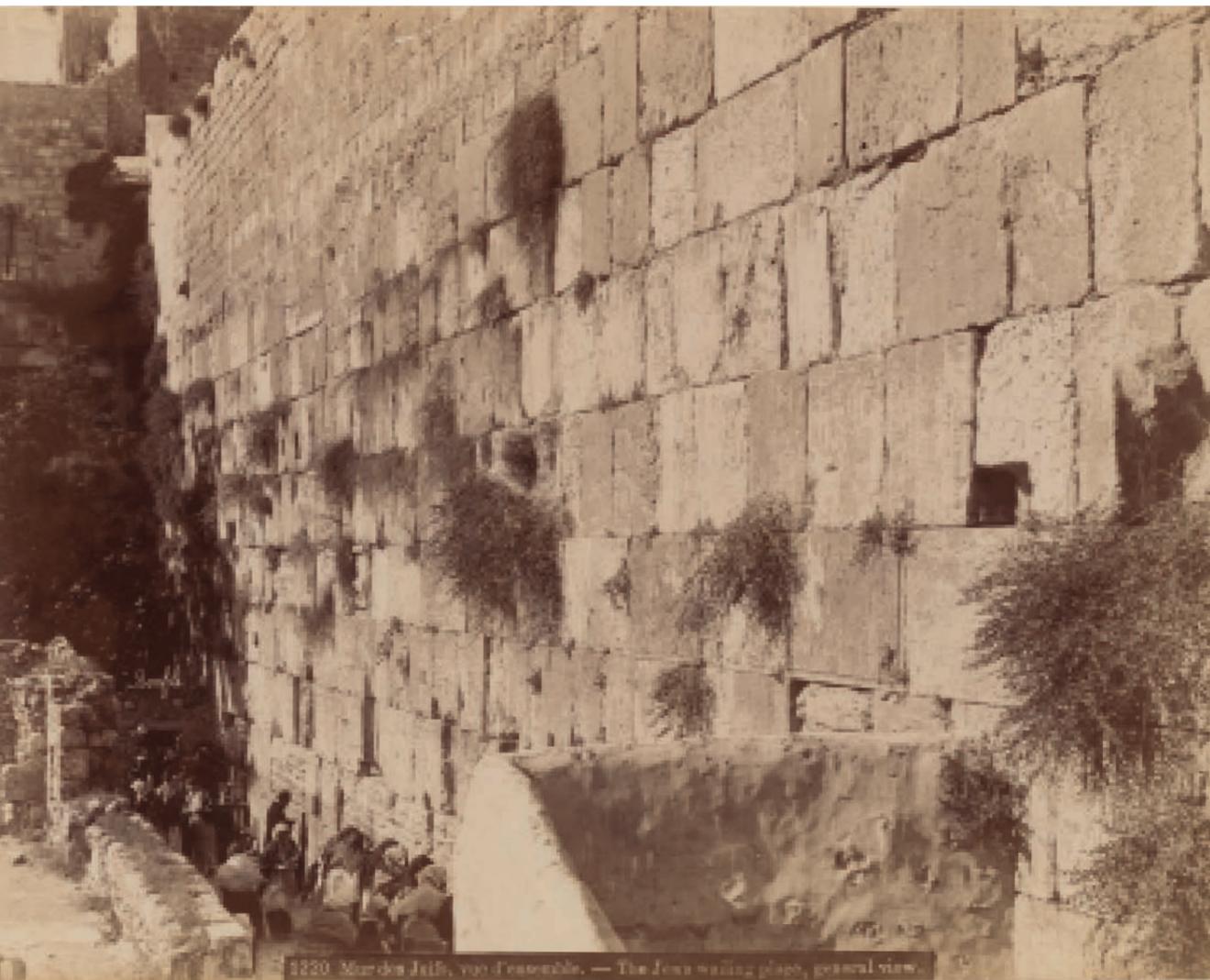
3 Robert Louis Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 110.
4 Qur’an, 5:21.

5 Shelomo Dov Goitein, “The Sanctity of Jerusalem and Palestine in Early Islam,” in *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1966), pp. 135–48.

6 Shlomo Buber, *Midrash Tanhuma, Leviticus, Sacred* 10 (Vilnius: Ha-Almanah ve Ha-Ahim Rom, 1885), p. 78.

7 Jacob Ashkenazi, *The ‘Mother of All Churches’: The Church of Palestine from Its Foundation to the Arab Conquest* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2009), pp. 22–35.

8 Josef Meri, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 18.



Félix Bonfils, *Mur des Juifs, vue d'ensemble* (The Jews' wailing place, general view), Jerusalem, 1870–85



Francis Frith, "Street view in Jerusalem, with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre," in *The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments*, Jerusalem, 1862–63



Félix Bonfils, *Vue générale de l'emplacement du temple de Salomon* (General view of the site of Solomon's temple), Jerusalem, 1870–85

The Mount of Olives lies on the eastern edge of Jerusalem, and plays a cardinal role in the eschatology of Abrahamic religions. It is the site where the final judgment and resurrection of the latter day will take place. Over time it became saturated with sacred sites and consequently a desired location for pilgrims. Some of these sites were shared among the different faiths either by sharing location and practice according to their own understandings, or participating in the rituals of but one faith.⁹ In the Tomb of Mary near Gethsemane, Muslims frequently attend Christian ceremonies. The Chapel of Ascension, which was later transformed into a Muslim shrine by Saladin, became a site where pilgrims of both religions prayed in different locations at the site. Within this compound stands a sarcophagus that suggests a different

9 Ora Limor, "Sharing Sacred Space: Holy Places in Jerusalem Between Christianity, Judaism and Islam," in *In Laudem Hierosolymitani: Studies in Crusades and*

Medieval Culture in Honour of Benjamin Z. Kedar, ed. Ronnie Ellenblum, Iris Shagrir, and Jonathan Riley-Smith (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 219–31.

type of sharing. Christian tradition identifies it as the tomb of Saint Pelagia. Muslim tradition, documented since the twelfth century, names the person buried in the tomb as Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya, a famous female saint of early Islam. A belated Jewish text suggests this tomb is that of the prophetess Huldah. While here three different saints are venerated in the same tomb, Christians, Jews, and Muslims agree that King David is buried in an ancient tomb in Mount Zion. This act of sharing did not always fare well. The site has experienced periods of conflict, and some religious groups were banned from entering and worshipping at the site. Felix Fabri, a fifteenth-century Christian clergy member and gifted writer, has described the place as highly revered by Christians, Jews, and Muslims, blaming the Jews for enticing the Mamluk Sultan to withhold entrance to the site for non-Muslims.¹⁰ Let us now step away from Jerusalem and encounter more sites where sanctity brings people of different faiths together, sharing the same location and at times the same tradition.

Tomb of Samuel/Maqam Nabi Samwil

The tomb associated with the prophet Samuel first appeared in Christian oral traditions, which have circulated since late antiquity. For pilgrims traveling from Jaffa, this place is the first sighting of Jerusalem, and has therefore been named Montjoie or Mount of Joy. Following the expulsion of the Crusaders, Jews and Muslims accepted traditions connecting Samuel's Tomb to this location.¹¹ The site maintained a precarious coexistence until the eighteenth century, allowing pilgrims of all faiths to stop and pray on their way to Jerusalem.

Tomb of Rachel/Qubat Rahil

The Tomb of Rachel the Matriarch was mentioned in 1495 by a Jerusalemite Qadi: "Between Jerusalem and Bethlehem the Dome of Rachel the mother of Joseph our master the righteous may peace be upon him. And the Dome lies close to the road between Bethlehem and Beit Jala and it boasts a dome which lays in the direction of the Rock in Jerusalem and it is widely visited by pilgrims."¹² Tolerance among the different groups at the tomb was both intricate and antagonistic. Mostly dedicated to female veneration and requests, travelers and pilgrims of all faiths have described the tomb in growing numbers since the twelfth century. A dome constructed during the late Mamluk period in the fifteenth century gave it its distinguished look by which it was known until the modern period.

Cave of Machpela/al-Haram al-Ibrahimi and the Cult of Mamre

Hebron and its environs have long been associated with Abraham the Patriarch and his family. A Jewish sanctuary developed around the caves was associated with the burial of the biblical patriarchs and matriarchs,

10 Felix Fabri, *The Book of Wanderings of Brother Felix Fabri*, trans. A. Stewart (London: Palestinian Pilgrims Text Society, 1897), pp. 244–45.

11 Meri, *Cult of Saints*, pp. 239–44.

12 Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali al-'Ulaymi, *al-Uns al-Jalil bi-Tarikh al-Quds wa al-Khalil*, II (Beirut: Maktabat al-Nahda, 1995), p. 66.

probably from the time of King Herod (40–4 BCE). Since the fourth century, Christian pilgrims have visited the site and accepted the Jewish tradition therein. After the Muslim conquest in the seventh century, the site was transformed into a mosque but non-Muslims were not banned. Then in 1187 AD, following the Muslim victory at the Battle of Hattin against the Crusades, the Sultan Saladin reconstructed the site and built an impressive mosque adorned with a minaret. During the Mamluk period, the site was transformed into a mosque and non-Muslims were forbidden to pray inside. They were permitted to pray outside against a small window, which was believed to stand opposite the tomb of Abraham.¹³ Although this place is considered to be a Muslim endowment associated with Ibrahim (Abraham), who is greatly revered in Islam as the first monotheistic believer and father of Ismail (Ishmael), Christians and Jews were allowed visits and veneration within.

The city of Hebron—associated with Abraham and the Oaks of Mamre, three miles north of the cave—morphed into a satellite shrine to the tombs. The shrine at Mamre inspired visitors across a wide cultural and religious spectrum until it ceased to exist in the tenth or eleventh century. The cult of Mamre included both monotheistic and non-monotheistic pilgrims of a variety of ethnicities and religions, all of whom prayed and conducted ceremonies at the same shared site.¹⁴

Elijah's Cave/Maqam Nabi Khidr on Mount Carmel

The twelfth-century Jewish traveler Benjamin of Tudela narrates a feast of different groups praying and venerating the prophet Elijah in a cave at the northern slopes of Mount Carmel:

Two sons of Edom (i.e., two Christian denominations) constructed a shrine which they called Saint Ilyas. At the summit of the mountain the place where Elijah restored the altar during the time of Ahab is known.”¹⁵

The figure of Elijah has long been associated with the coming of the Messiah, hence his popularity among believers in the Holy Land. It is here at the Cave on Mount Carmel that traditions located the site of his dramatic showdown with the prophets of Baal and Asherah. Elijah, who is also known in Islam as al-Khidr and is greatly popular in the region, has been worshipped at Mount Carmel since the late antiquities by Christians, Jews, Muslims, and even the Druze who arrived in the region in the thirteenth century.

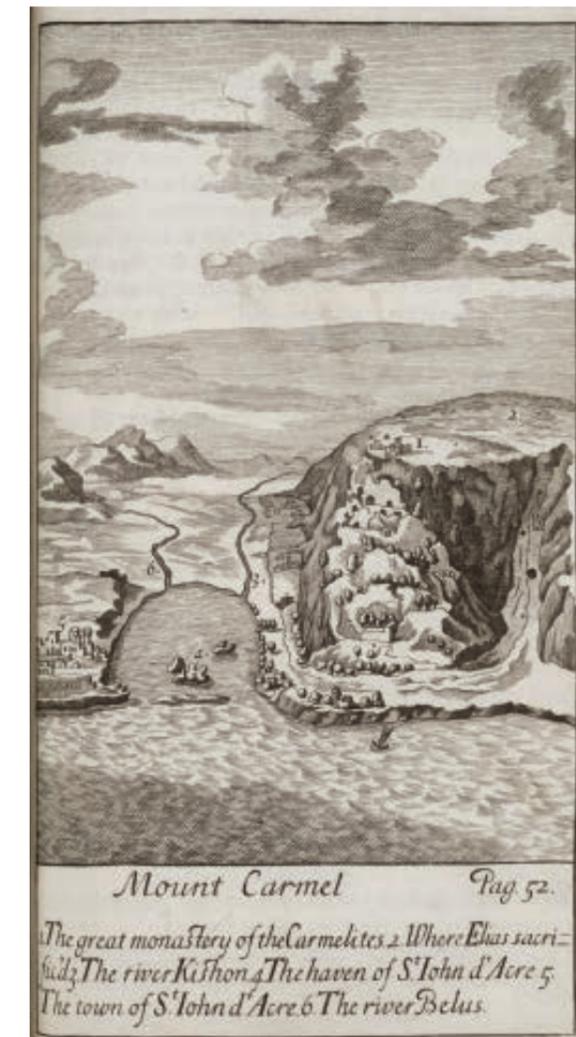
The Holy Land presents a more complex and charged development of sanctity than any other region in the world. This is surely the

¹³ Yitzhak Reiter, “Contest or Cohabitation in Shared Holy Places? The Cave of the Patriarchs and Samuel’s Tomb,” in *Holy Places in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Confrontation and Co-Existence*, ed. Marshall J. Breger, Yitzhak Reiter, and Leonard Hammer (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 166.

¹⁴ Aryeh Kofsky, “Mamre: A Case of a Regional Cult?” in *Sharing the Sacred: Religious Contacts and Conflicts in the Holy Land, First-Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. Aryeh Kofsky and Guy G. Strumisa (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1998), pp. 19–30.

¹⁵ Josef Meri, “Re-Appropriating Sacred Space: Medieval Jews and Muslims Seeking Elijah and al-Khadir,” *Medieval Encounters: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Culture in Confluence and Dialogue* 5, no. 3 (1999), p. 245.

most condensed and meaningful sacred landscape of the Abrahamic religions, revered by many around the world. Over time, pilgrims and devotees reconfigured their understanding of this unique landscape to be spiritually linked to the foundations of their respective beliefs. They commemorated, reenacted, and recreated the physical reality of the events or traditions assigned to this land not only by invoking scriptures, but also through visual and ritual forms and the physical demarcation of holy presence. Thus the land is dotted with a plethora of sacred sites—marked by history, politics, and contingency—that have been passed from one religion to the other with a varying degree of tolerance or acceptance of the “Other.” Coexistence in the Holy Land forces us to think of ways to accommodate different creeds while sharing the same geography. Harmony was not always present among the stakeholders, but in many places, believers could find coexistence through a mutual admiration for the sacred locations, accepting differences among groups striving to cling to the very same land.



Henry Maundrell, depiction of Mount Carmel in *A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, at Easter*, A.D. 1697, Haifa, Israel, 1749



Bernhard von Breydenbach

**PEREGRINATIO IN TERRAM SANCTAM
(PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND)**

MAINZ: ERHARD REUWICH, 1486

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, RARE BOOK DIVISION

Bernhard von Breydenbach's *Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam* (Pilgrimage to the Holy Land), first published in 1486, is a pivotal and influential example of early printing. Breydenbach and the painter Erhard Reuwich explored, described, and represented the peoples and places as well as the flora and fauna of the Levant within this woodcut.

This panoramic view of the Holy Land shows the region from Damascus to Alexandria, the pyramids along the Nile, and even Mecca. It is also the first topographically accurate view of Jerusalem, which is the central focus of this print. The holy city is readily discernible by its prominent Dome of the Rock, labeled "Templum Salomonis."

This is certainly a Christian vision of Jerusalem. We also know that the account was used to incite rhetoric of the Crusades.

Yet, it is also possible to see the past and present of the sacred places of the three religions interwoven as the elusive historical and political subtext. The Muslim Dome of the Rock, which is identified by its Old Testament ancestry as the temple, and the numerous Islamic structures that surround the Church of the Holy Sepulcher vividly display the Islamic hold on the city. This is perhaps the most beautiful map of Jerusalem, stunning in its details and delightful in its prodigious reach beyond the city itself. —KB

Ya'akov ben Yehuda
**THE TEMPLE AND CITY OF JERUSALEM,
 MAY IT BE RESTORED**

1731
 THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, DOROT JEWISH DIVISION

This Jewish depiction of Jerusalem comes from a German *Haggadah* from 1731. The *Haggadah* is a book containing the prayers and readings for the Seder meal on the Jewish festival of Passover. It includes a narrative of the Exodus that is central to this celebration. While Jews generally avoided the decoration of their holy books with figurative representations, *Haggadot* are the most widely illustrated books in Jewish history.

This picture is related to the prayer for the *omer*, which is the forty-nine-day period between Passover and Shavuot. The period is important since it signaled the beginning of the barley harvest when the Jews would bring the first "sheaves" to the Temple to thank God for the harvest. This image of the Temple represents the place where the *omer*, or "sheaf," was brought. Moreover, while Passover indicated the liberation of Jews from Egypt, Shavuot signified the ability of the Jews to become self-sustaining as a nation. It is especially noteworthy that the paragraph at the bottom of the page is a prayer in Yiddish. —KB



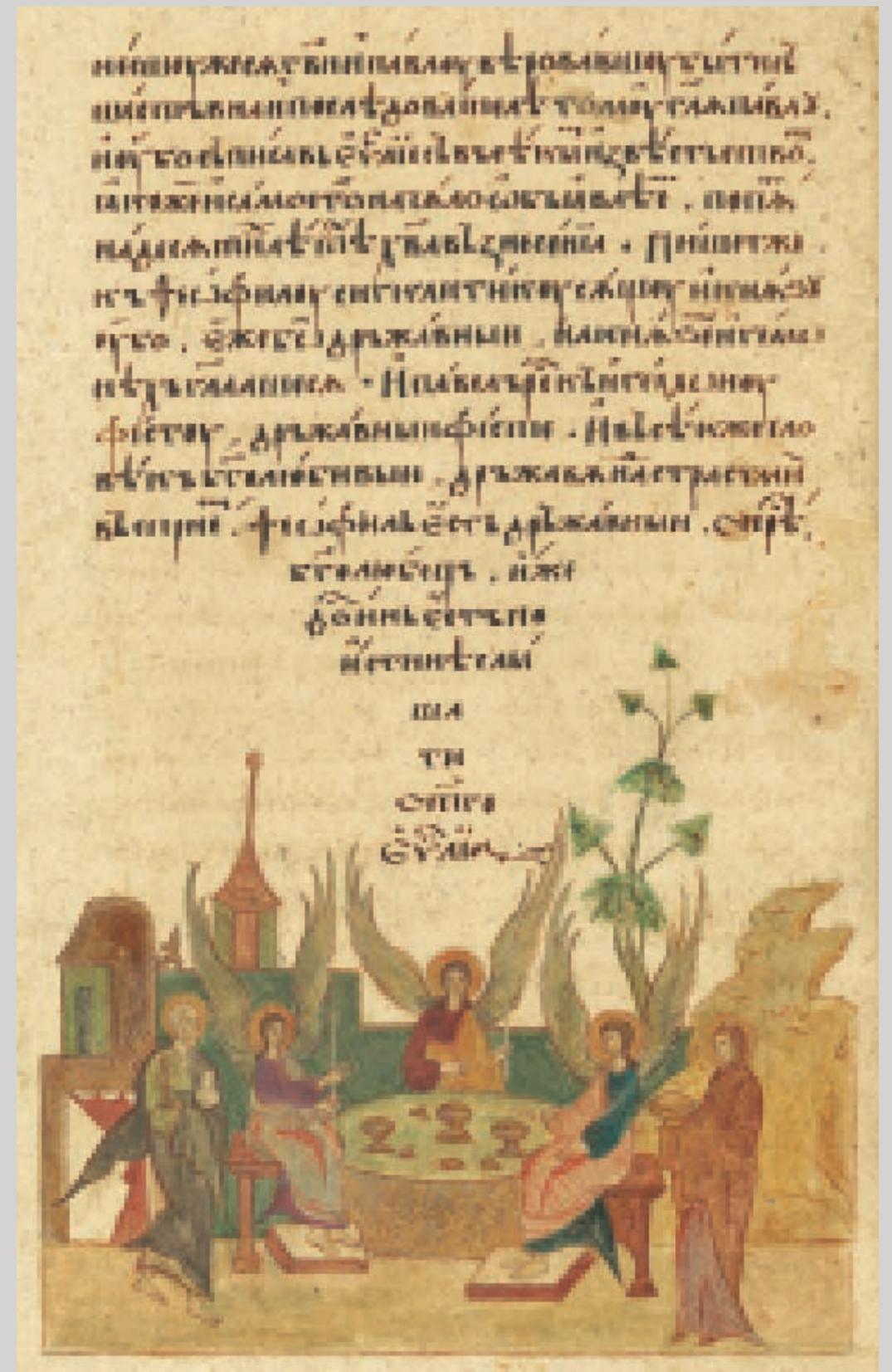
**SCENE OF ABRAHAM HOSTING ANGELS,
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE**

RUSSIA, FIFTEENTH CENTURY
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, SPENCER COLLECTION

This illuminated manuscript illustrates the hospitality that Abraham (left) and Sarah (right) showed three heavenly visitors at Mamre (Genesis 18:2–15). After the couple offered their guests a meal under an oak tree, one of the angels announced to Sarah that she would have a son, Isaac, despite her advanced age. Later Christian authors would view this event as a prefiguration of the Holy Trinity.

The hospitality (*phylo xenia* in Greek) shown to the three strangers is a major episode in all three monotheistic faiths. It is also a common denominator of many shared holy places: visitors, even from another religion, are often welcome and hosted without discrimination or hostility.

Considered to be located close to the holy city of Hebron (al-Khalil in Arabic, meaning the “Friend of God” according to the appellation of Abraham in the Qur’an), the site of Mamre has been a place of pilgrimage since the fourth century, at least according to the historian Sozomen, who described shared festivities between Jews, Christians, and Pagans. Today the supposed sacred tree is located on the property of a Russian Orthodox monastery. Its Muslim guardian sells relics to visitors coming from all over the world.
—MP



**KETUBAH WITH ABRAHAM AND JACOB,
THE BINDING OF ISAAC**

NIZZA MONFERRATO, ITALY, 6 ELUL AM 5542 (AUGUST 16, 1782)
JEWISH MARRIAGE CONTRACT (BRIDE: DEBORAH BIANCA LE-BEIT BARUKH;
GROOM: ABRAHAM JACOB OTTOLENGHI)
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, DOROT JEWISH DIVISION

A Jewish marriage contract (*ketubah* in Hebrew) often includes references and symbols related to the names of the bride or groom. In this eighteenth-century *ketubah* from Piedmont, Italy, the groom's name is represented by two pictures depicting his namesakes, Abraham and Jacob.

The vignette on the left features the binding of Isaac (Genesis 22:1–14), in which God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son. Obeying God, Abraham led his son to the top of Mount Moriah, but an angel arose and interrupted him at the last minute. Then Abraham saw a ram, sacrificing it instead. The vignette on the right is a portrayal of Jacob's dream (Genesis 28:11–19), in which angels descend a ladder from the heavens, which they then re-ascend. Many explanations have been given of the meaning of Jacob's dream, the simplest of which is an exemplar of the covenant between God and Jacob's ancestors. —KB



SCENES OF ABRAHAM, SARAH, ISHMAEL, ISAAC, AND HAGAR IN WELTCHRONIK (CHRONICLE OF THE WORLD)

BAVARIA, 1402
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, SPENCER COLLECTION

This delicate manuscript is part of the *Chronicle of the World* by Rudolf von Ems, a thirteenth-century scholarly Swiss poet. After the author's death, the manuscript was completed and folios including these two were added. These pages depict scenes from Abraham's cycle in the Bible. Abraham is illustrated with his wife, Sarah, as are his two sons, Ishmael (by Sarah's servant Hagar) and Isaac (by Sarah), the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael to the desert and their protection by an angel, and finally, Ishmael as an archer.

According to the Qur'an, Abraham took Hagar and Ishmael to Mecca and later returned to build the Ka'ba, the holiest place in Islam. In spite of Ishmael's exile, the Bible says that they gathered for Abraham's funeral in the cave of Machpelah close to Mamre: "His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, the field Abraham had bought from the Hittites. There, Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah." (Genesis 25:9-10) —MP



DE LA TWYERE PSALTER

YORK, ENGLAND, 1304–10
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, SPENCER COLLECTION

Medieval Christian Psalters were often lavishly illuminated with decorated initial letters and full-page miniatures. This Psalter, realized at the beginning of the fourteenth century in northern England and probably written for a Yorkshire family by the name of De la Twyere, includes images that illustrate Old and New Testament episodes along with scenes of Christian saints' martyrdoms.

The pages seen here show several biblical scenes featuring a “horned” Moses—a representation that was widespread in Western Christian iconography from the Middle Ages until early modern times, including a well-known statue by the Italian Renaissance artist Michelangelo. In the De la Twyere Psalter we see Moses and his brother Aaron before the Pharaoh. Aaron’s rod has been transformed into a serpent and Moses holds out his staff to part the Red Sea, drowning the Pharaoh’s soldiers. Moses and the Israelites then sing praise to the Lord who has rescued His people.
—DA



Léon de Laborde

**VIEW OF THE CONVENT OF SAINT CATHERINE
IN VOYAGE DE L'ARABIE PÉTRÉE (TRAVELS IN
ARABIA PETREA)**

PARIS: GIARD, 1830

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, RARE BOOK DIVISION

Based on the drawing by the French traveler and politician Léon de Laborde (1807–1869), this engraving depicts the Byzantine Orthodox Monastery of Saint Catherine of Alexandria. Built in the sixth century, the monastery stands at the foot of the Jebel Musa (“Moses” in Arabic) in the southern Sinai Peninsula, which in Christian and Muslim scriptures is identified with the Mount Horeb where Moses received the Tables of the Law.

Tradition tells that the young Muhammad visited the monastery where a monk informed him of his future as a prophet. In exchange, Muhammad would have offered his protection to the monastery and would have signed with the imprinting of his hand a document

granting a number of privileges to the monastery of Saint Catherine (a copy from the Ottoman period is held within the monastery).

The Monastery of Saint Catherine was an important place of sojourn for Muslim pilgrims on their way to and from Mecca. For several centuries Muslims who sojourned in the monastery would go up the mountain, where a chapel and a mosque stood side by side. They also prayed in a post-Fatimid-period mosque inside the monastery as well as in the chapel of the Burning Bush. The engraving presents a caravan of North African pilgrims arriving at the monastery on their return from Mecca. —DA





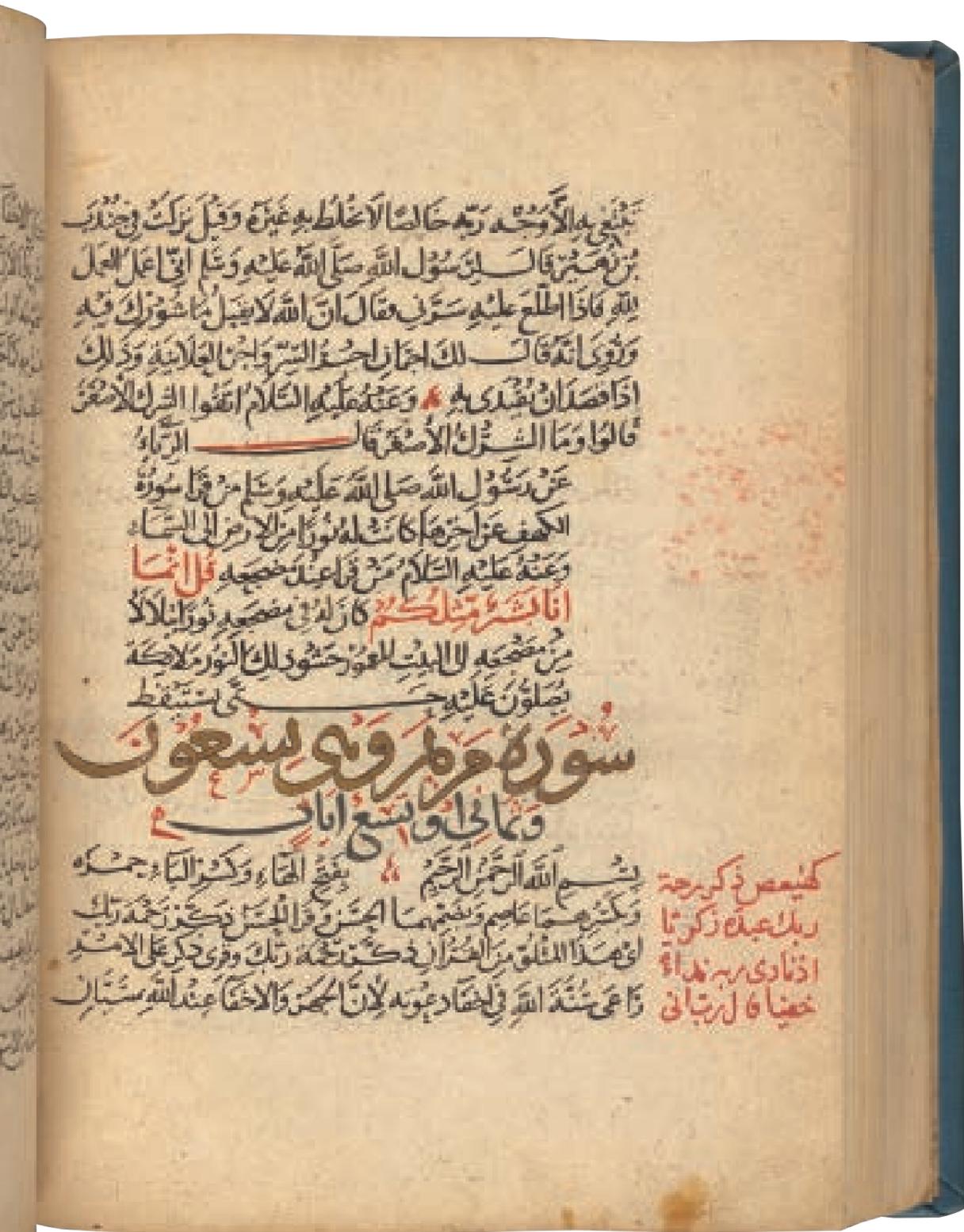
Luigi Mayer, "Grotto of the Nativity" in *Views in the Ottoman Dominions*, 1810 (detail)

Muslims at Marian Shrines

Dionigi Albera

Among the Christian holy figures who may be seen as intermediaries with other religions, the Virgin Mary has paramount importance. The attraction exerted by Mary on non-Christian pilgrims is particularly pronounced for Muslim communities.

Marian devotion is well implanted in the Islamic tradition, in which sacred texts sanction it. She is the only female figure designated by name in the Qur'an, while all other women are simply indicated as the unnamed daughter, mother, sister, or wife of an identified man. Moreover, the name "Mary" recurs more times in the Qur'an than the New Testament: thirty-four occurrences versus nineteen. In addition to evocations scattered in the text, she is a central figure in two chapters (surahs). One, the third, is titled "The Family of Imran," who is the father of Mary; the other,



Zamakhshari, Al-Kashshaf
 an Haqa'iq an al-Tanzil
 (The Discoverer of the Truth
 about the Revelation),
 vol. 3, 15th century

the nineteenth, bears her name. The Christian reader is by no means disoriented in the Marian universe drawn by the Qur'an, which mentions her nativity, her presentation to the temple, the annunciation, the virginal conception, and the birth of Jesus. According to the Qur'an, God elected Mary. She is a sign for all of humanity and an example for believers; she is a living model of modesty, piety, trust, and abandonment to divine will.¹ The Qur'anic references to Mary have extended an important influence on the Muslim tradition, and have been further developed in the hadiths, the commentaries of the Qur'an, and mystical literature. This textual dimension has been consistently accompanied by important demonstrations of Marian piety. She has been and is still venerated by Muslims, who often frequent Christian sanctuaries for this reason.

The web of interfaith practice among Christians and Muslims under the aegis of Mary is well established in the Mediterranean region, where many sources attest to the spiritual tenacity throughout the centuries, showing forms of sharing in the long-term.² In this ancient zone of cohabitation, it is possible to draw centuries-old Islamic topography of the Virgin Mary, dotted with a number of shrines jointly worshipped by Christians and Muslims. Some of these sites have experienced an uninterrupted continuity until today; others have decayed, but have given way to new sanctuaries that even in this period of stark contrast are able to attract a mass of worshipers of different religious affiliations.

Marian sites within the Holy Land frequently constitute points of encounter between Christians and Muslims, and from this point of view Bethlehem may be considered the epicenter of the Islamic topography of the Virgin Mary. Already in the tenth century, Eutychius (877–940), a Melkite patriarch of Alexandria, reported that Muslims gathered for prayer in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Accounts of Christian pilgrims throughout the centuries describe the presence of Muslims who traveled to Bethlehem to worship the Blessed Virgin and her child. According to a local legend, before fleeing to Egypt Mary took refuge with Jesus in a cave situated in Bethlehem, where some drops of her milk fell, conferring a miraculous power upon the space. Century after century, women of different religions have crushed fragments of the cave's rock walls into powder, which, when mixed with water, they drank to ensure the abundance of their own milk. The Franciscan monk Francesco Suriano (ca. 1450–1530), a well-informed witness who spent several years in the Holy Land between the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century, writes that the fragments of the marble wall of the Church of the Nativity were used in a similar way: "the Moslem women make bread [with the fragments], and when it is baked, they send it throughout the country: a piece of this is taken by expectant mothers when they feel the pangs of child birth; when eaten

¹ See Nilo Geagea, *Mary of the Koran: A Meeting Point between Christianity and Islam*, trans. Lawrence T. Fares (New York: Philosophical Library, 1984); and Michel Dousse, *Marie la musulmane* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2005).
² See Alexandra Cuffel, "'Henceforward All Generations Will Call Me Blessed': Medieval Christian Tales of Non-Christian Marian Veneration," *Mediterranean Studies* 12 (2003), pp. 37–60; Dionigi

Albera, "La Vierge et l'islam: Mélange de civilisations en Méditerranée," *Le Débat* 137 (2005), pp. 134–44; and Dionigi Albera, "Combining Practices and Beliefs: Muslim Pilgrims at Marian Shrines," in *Sharing the Sacred: The Politics and Pragmatics of Intercommunal Relations around Holy Places*, ed. Glenn Bowman (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), pp. 10–24.

they bring forth without pain, according to what these Moslem women told me.”³

The virtues of Mary have pervaded several other places in the Holy Land. Another central site is the Church of the Tomb of the Virgin Mary at the foot of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, as testified by Suriano:

Many a time I have heard these Moslem women over that glorious tomb of our Lady say: O Holy, O Virgin, O blessed, O mother of Issa, that is, Jesus Christ, O Our Queen, O Mary we pray you that you pray to God for us. And barefooted they enter the tomb filling it with butra and other aromatic and odoriferous powders. They take it bad that we call her our mother, saying that we are unworthy of so great a queen, and that as she belonged to them the Christians were wrong in usurping her.⁴

It should be added that the Muslim community acquired formal rights inside this church. A precise drawing by Bernardino Amico, who sojourned in the Holy Land at the end of the sixteenth century, shows the presence of a mihrab (the niche indicating the direction that Muslims should face when praying) alongside several altars belonging to various Christian denominations.⁵ In the second part of the seventeenth century, the French traveler Laurent d’Arvieux (1635–1702) reported: “the Turks dug a sort of niche in the wall, which is used by them as a mosque, where they make their prayers.”⁶

Furthermore early modern sources attest that in Jerusalem Muslims visited the Well of Mary with reverence to drink the water and make ablutions. At the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth, two marble columns marked, according to tradition, the places where Mary and the angel Gabriel sat at the time of the annunciation. Muslims, like Christians, held these columnar markers in great veneration, passing between and rubbing ailing parts of their bodies against them. D’Arvieux, who visited the church in 1660, described these practices. He also remarked that at Mount Carmel the Muslims admired with devotion a painting of the Virgin Mary on the altar of a chapel inside a Catholic monastery.⁷

The same phenomenon was present in Syria at sanctuaries consecrated to the Virgin Mary, like the monastery of Saidnaya, approximately 25 kilometers from Damascus. This Syrian shrine was immensely popular during the Middle Ages and attracted a great number of pilgrims. Particularly reputed was a Marian icon attributed to Saint Luke to which many miracles were credited. A perfumed liquid with miraculous properties was collected under the icon and distributed

3 Francesco Suriano, *Treatise on the Holy Land*, trans. Fr. Theophilus Bellorini O.F.M. and Fr. Eugene Hoade O.F.M. (Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1949), p. 137.

4 Suriano, *Treatise on the Holy Land*, p. 114.

5 See Bernardino Amico, *Trattato delle Piante & Immagini de Sacri Edifizi di Terra Santa: Disegnate in Ierusalemme secondo le regole della prospetiva & uera misura della lor grandezza* (Florence, 1620).

6 See Laurent d’Arvieux, *Mémoires du chevalier d’Arvieux*, II (Paris: C.-J.-B. Delespine, 1735), p. 180.

7 D’Arvieux, *Mémoires du chevalier d’Arvieux*, II, p. 174 (Well of Mary), pp. 270–71 (Nazareth), pp. 315–17 (Mount Carmel).



Cornelis de Bruyn, “Casa de Matarea,” in *Voyage au Levant* (Voyage to the Levant), 1714

to Catholic, Ethiopian, and Greek Orthodox pilgrims. Some medieval accounts affirm that Muslims frequented this sanctuary in order to pray to the Virgin Mary and mention miracles concerning Muslim faithful.⁸ According to the European pilgrim Thetmar, who visited the sanctuary in 1217, a Muslim ruler of Damascus miraculously recovered from a disease thanks to a pilgrimage to the Madonna of Saidnaya.⁹ In the seventeenth century, d'Arvieux also remarked that Muslims frequented the sanctuary, and entered “after being purified, as when they enter their Mosques.”¹⁰

Christians and Muslims have jointly worshipped at several sacred sites linked to the tradition of the Holy Family's passage in Egypt.¹¹ Matariah, near Cairo, is probably the most important among them.¹² From the Middle Ages to the early modern period, Christian and Muslim pilgrims visited this holy site where they could find several elements that, according to a tradition accepted by both Christians and Muslims, were associated with the Holy Family: the sycamore that the Virgin Mary used to hide with her child, a garden of balsamic trees, and a miraculous source.

As a whole, these mixed devotional practices were well established and recurring in the eastern and southern regions of the Mediterranean, an area that has historically retained a kaleidoscope of peoples and religions. On the contrary, the northern shores of the Mediterranean did not begin to experience a considerable influx of Muslim population or cases of Muslim attendance at Marian places of worship until the twentieth century.¹³ The same century witnessed the clash of bellicose nationalisms that has altered the ethnic and religious profile of the southern and eastern Mediterranean through a process of homogenization, which put an end to centuries of coexistence and made interreligious sharing more difficult. Nevertheless, the figure of Mary remained a crucial bridge between Christianity and Islam despite political and religious tensions.

A significant example of lasting coexistence is the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, which has been a meeting point between Christianity and Islam for at least ten centuries, and continues now to welcome the Muslim faithful. Some more recent sanctuaries have also become symbols of interreligious hospitality. For instance, the House of the Virgin in Ephesus, which was “discovered” in the late nineteenth century on the basis of visions of the German mystic Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774–1824), is a place of pilgrimage that has attracted considerable crowds of Christian and Muslim faithful since the 1950s. It is now possible to see prostrate Muslims praying along with Catholic nuns reciting the rosary in this small Turkish church, while nearby

8 See Paul Devos, “Les premières versions occidentales de la légende de Saïdnaia,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 65 (1947), pp. 212–78; Benjamin Z. Kedar, “Convergences of Oriental Christian, Muslim and Frankish Worshippers: The Case of Saydnaya and the Knights Templar,” in *The Crusades and the Military Orders: Expanding the Frontiers of Medieval Latin Christianity*, ed. Zsolt Hunyadi and József Laszlovszky (Budapest: Department of Medieval Studies, Central European University, 2001), pp. 89–100.

9 See Josef Meri, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 211.

10 D'Arvieux, *Mémoires du chevalier d'Arvieux* II, p. 462.

11 See Lucette Valensi, *La fuite en Égypte: Histoires d'Orient et d'Occident: Essai d'histoire comparée* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2002).

12 See Ugo Zanetti, “Matarieh, la sainte famille et les baumiers,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 111 (1993): pp. 21–68.

13 See Dionigi Albera, “The Virgin Mary, the Sanctuary and the Mosque: Interfaith Coexistence at a Pilgrimage Centre,” in *Gender, Nation and Religion in European Pilgrimage*, ed. Willy Jansen and Catrien Notermans (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 193–208.

in the courtyard a huge wishing wall welcomes the intentions of all pilgrims without religious distinctions.¹⁴

Even periods of violence and political turmoil did not put an end to interreligious sharing. Interfaith practices linked to Mary continued in Algeria amidst the war of independence, the rise of Islamism, and the civil war of the 1990s. During this period, populations of European origin almost entirely abandoned the country and several Christian buildings were either damaged or transformed into mosques. Yet even in the most dangerous moments of the 1990s, Muslims continued to worship at Our Lady of Africa, a Catholic sanctuary that is among the most important places of pilgrimage in the Algerian capital.¹⁵ In an article published in 2007 by the journal of the Missionaries of Africa, the White Father Paul Marioge and long-term rector of the Basilica of Our Lady of Africa described the practices of the Muslims inside the church:

Many are burning a candle; some of them wet their face with holy water! Others bring flowers, or incense, or perfume. . . . The lovers put a prayer slip beneath the statue, women desiring to have children bring a doll that represents their wishes, and others come with a sick child. Our visitors are slipping their hands on the stones of the wall, they would like to touch the statue, as in Lourdes people touch the rock of the cave.

If the wish has been fulfilled, they come to thank with a gift, an offering, a bouquet of flowers, embroidery, or a rug. The newlyweds offer a statue representing the couple in holiday clothes. Some offer an ex-voto.¹⁶

Similar phenomena occur on other shores of the Mediterranean. The long civil war from 1975 to 1990, which opposed the various Lebanese religious groups, did not put an end to devotional porosity. Even today there are numerous Marian shrines attended by Muslims,¹⁷ such as the monastery of Saïdet-en-Nourié in the region of Tripoli, the sanctuary of Saïdet-el-Mantara near Sidon, and the shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in Harissa. This phenomenon is particularly relevant at the latter shrine, which is the main Lebanese pilgrimage center, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. There one can see Muslim women, wrapped in their long black clothes, lighting candles or climbing the base of the immense statue of the Virgin Mary overhanging the sea.

A massive display of mixed devotion has occurred since 2004 in a village in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon around a miraculous manifestation of the Virgin Mary.¹⁸ A Jordanian Muslim child, while

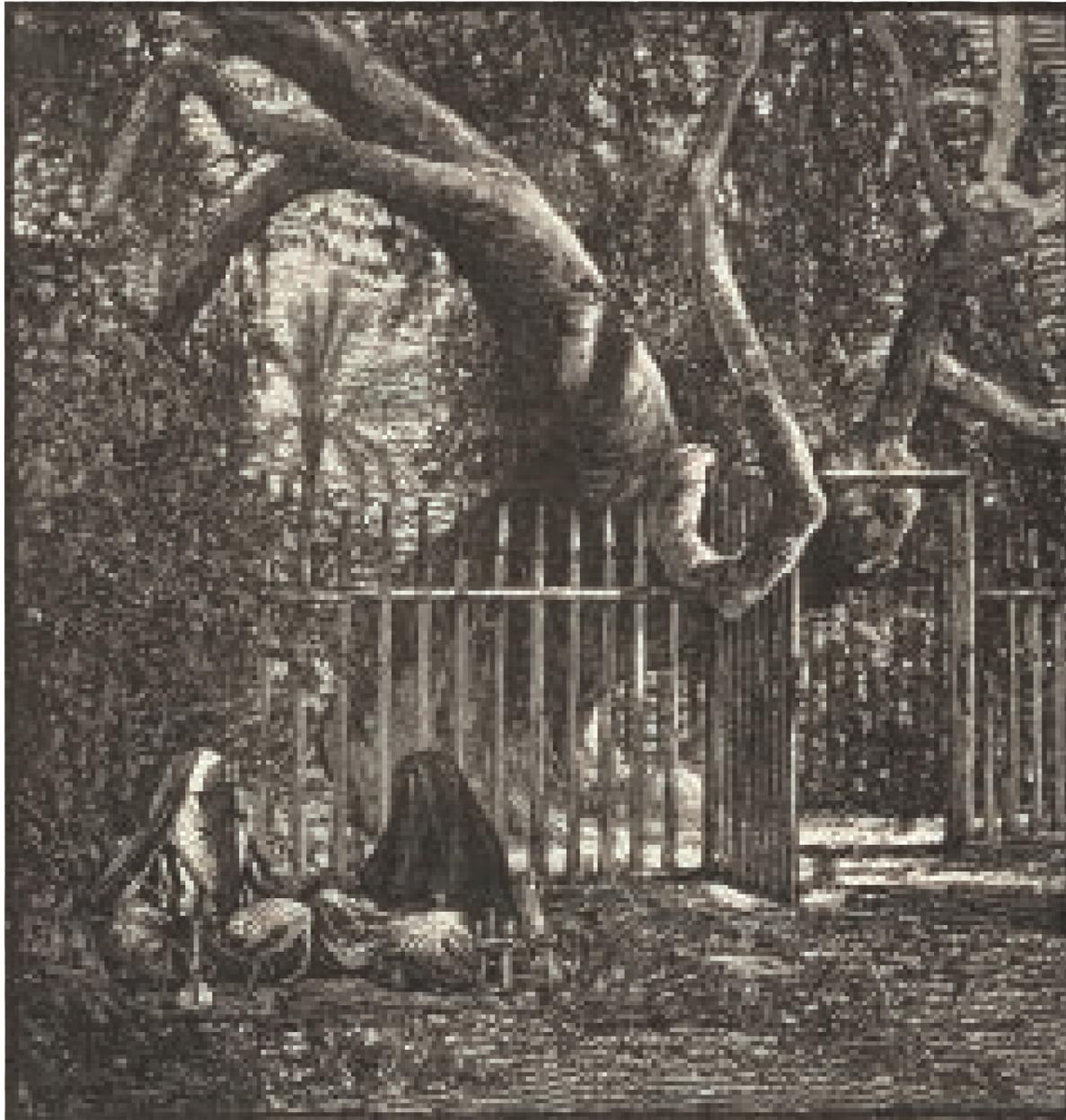
14 See Manoël Pénicaud, “Muslim Pilgrims at the House of Mary in Ephesus: Considerations on ‘Open Sanctuaries’ in the Mediterranean,” in *The Idea of the Mediterranean*, ed. Mario Mignone (Stony Brooks: Forum Italicum, 2016), pp. 166–83.

15 See Albera, “Combining Practices and Beliefs.”

16 See Dionigi Albera, “Religious Antagonism and Shared Sanctuaries in Algeria,” in *Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites: Religion, Politics, and Conflict Resolution*, ed. Elazar Barkan and Karen Barkey (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), pp. 97–129, specifically pp. 117–18.

17 See Nour Farra-Haddad, “Les pèlerinages votifs au Liban: Chemins de rencontres des communautés religieuses,” in *Les pèlerinages au Maghreb et au Moyen-Orient: Espaces publics, espaces du public*, ed. Sylvia Chiffolleau and Anna Madœuf (Damas: Presses de l'Ifpo, 2005), pp. 379–95.

18 See Emma Aubin-Boltanski, “La Vierge et la nation (Liban, 2004–2007),” *Terrain* 50 (2008), pp. 82–99.



Charles W. Wilson,
 "The 'Virgin's Tree,'" in
Picturesque Palestine,
 Sinai and Egypt, 1880–84

visiting a church with his parents in Bechouat (which has been attended by Muslim worshippers over the past several centuries), witnessed a Marian statue become animated. The church was then visited by a large wave of pilgrims, including Catholic and Orthodox Christians as well as Shiites, Sunnis, and Druze, and a series of miraculous cures occurred, several of which concerned Muslims. This pilgrimage rapidly became a symbol of national unity in a context marked by the Syrian occupation in parts of Lebanon, including the Bekaa Valley, and has continued to be a site of unity in the following years.¹⁹

An eloquent testimony of the role of Mary as a bridge between Christianity and Islam is the fact that the Feast of Annunciation on March 25 has been sanctioned as an official Christian-Muslim holy day in Lebanon since 2010. On this day schools, banks, and official buildings are closed, and interfaith ceremonies are organized in several towns with common prayers and songs. This shared celebration of a crucial moment in the life of Mary—recognized both by Christian and Muslim traditions—provides a tangible sign of coexistence between the two religions.

Manifestations of Marian devotion linked to recent miraculous phenomena have also occurred in Egypt. In this case the main form has been that of apparitions of Mary on the roof of several Coptic churches. In a church located in Zaytûn, a district at the edge of Cairo, hundreds of thousands of people have claimed to see the Virgin Mary.²⁰ The first to distinguish the luminous image on the roof of the church were some Muslims in April 1968. Immense crowds of Christians and Muslims gathered in subsequent months around the church, hoping to witness the miracle. Between 1968 and 1970 the Coptic weekly newspaper *Watani* published approximately seven hundred accounts of miraculous healing linked to the Virgin Mary—Muslims recounted about eight percent of these.²¹ Some subsequent apparitions of Mary (like in Shubra in the 1980s, in Asyut in 2000–01, and in Giza in 2009) also attracted a large number of Muslim devotees.²²

The pilgrimages that I have rapidly taken in account here show that a tight web of relations between Christians and Muslims has developed around the figure of Mary. Certainly for the former Mary is the Mother of God, while for the latter she is only the mother of a prophet. But important theological convergences exist, which have made the interchanges at Marian sanctuaries easier. Moreover, ritual practice at Marian shrines has always been based on an informal repertoire of concrete, "tactile" piety, largely shared by Christians and Muslims. Universally viewed as a maternal figure, the Virgin Mary is sought for protection and help, especially concerning fertility, motherhood, and infancy, all of which are linked to a common human experience that largely transcends religious boundaries.

¹⁹ See Emma Aubin-Boltanski, "Fondation d'un centre de pèlerinage au Liban," *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 3, no. 151 (2010), pp. 149–68.

²⁰ See Sandrine Keriakos, "Apparitions of the Virgin in Egypt: Improving Relations between Copts and Muslims?" in *Sharing Sacred Spaces in the Mediterranean: Christians, Muslims, and Jews at Shrines and Sanctuaries*, ed. Dionigi Albera and Maria Couroucli (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2012), pp. 174–201.

²¹ Keriakos, "Apparitions of the Virgin in Egypt," p. 182.

²² Ibid. See also Angie Heo, "The Virgin Mary Between Christianity and Islam: Sainthood, Media, and Modernity in Egypt," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 81, no. 4 (December 2013), pp. 1117–38.

Master of Spencer 6

THE ANNUNCIATION

BOOK OF HOURS, USE OF ROME, IN LATIN AND FRENCH
BOURGES, FRANCE, CA. 1505–10
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, SPENCER COLLECTION

This French book of hours from the early sixteenth century is associated with the French artist known as Master of Spencer 6 (perhaps Laurent Boiron). This illuminator was active in Bourges between 1490 and 1510, and has been identified by art historians on the basis of a study of this New York Public Library manuscript.

In this double-page miniature of the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel reveals to the Virgin Mary that she will have a child through divine intervention. The child, she is told, will be a son and he will redeem the world: "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High" (Luke 1:30–32).

Accounts by Christian pilgrims often recorded the presence of Muslims who had come to revere the Virgin Mary in the church that was built on the site of the Annunciation in Nazareth. —DA





Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo

PICTURESQUE IDEAS OF THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

1750–53

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, MIRIAM AND IRA D. WALLACH DIVISION OF ART, PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS, PRINT COLLECTION



The Italian painter and printmaker Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo (1727–1804) was the son of the great fresco painter Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696–1770). This original series of twenty-seven plates entitled *Picturesque Ideas of the Flight into Egypt* was realized between 1750 and 1753.

The Gospel of Matthew briefly narrates the Flight into Egypt. Subsequent Christian tradition and apocryphal writings have considerably enriched this narrative. On the basis of these legends a long-lasting iconography developed in Christian art. In this set of engravings by Tiepolo, references to these traditions are freely combined with other elements.

The left plate illustrates the Holy Family leaving Bethlehem and starting the journey to Egypt in order to escape King Herod's wrath. At this exact point Tiepolo situates the encounter with Simon, echoing a story that Luke's Gospel locates in the Temple. This devout man predicts the glorious destiny of the child, but also provides a hint regarding his future Passion. The theme of the Crucifixion reverberates in the crossed planks of the door.

The subject of the Holy Family crossing a body of water by boat (above) has been explored in European paintings since the sixteenth century. Tiepolo

loved this theme, to which he devoted several plates. He depicted various such moments, propelling the boat like a Venetian gondola by an energetic angel, and situating the personages in a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere.

Tiepolo's style was influenced by the great printmakers of the seventeenth century whose works he collected, but it also reveals a typical sensibility of eighteenth-century Venetian etchers for the effects of air, light, and space. These sensibilities are particularly visible on this plate, on the right side of which features swans distinctive of Rococo taste.



This series is the most extended artistic sequence on the Flight into Egypt that is known, and reveals Tiepolo's capacity of creating a number of episodes without repeating himself.

For centuries the representation of the Flight had some paramount characteristics: Mary rides on a donkey, cradling the Infant in her arms, while Joseph walks before or behind. In this plate Tiepolo slightly modifies this pattern, with Joseph and Mary walking side by side. He is picturing his subjects from behind, which is one of his favorite

perspectives. Furthermore, the view of the walkers from below makes their effort more dramatic. In the background it is possible to perceive some buildings and a Greco-Roman temple.



In the series, Tiepolo adopts some of the traditional motifs linked to the Flight into Egypt. In this plate he develops an important topic of the literary and iconographic tradition—that of the fountain. During a break in their travels, a fountain miraculously appeared under the command of Jesus to refresh the Holy Family. This event has been generally associated with the site of Matariah, near Cairo, which has drawn for several centuries crowds of pilgrims, both Christians and Muslims, attracted by the miraculous properties of the spring water and by the other material traces of the stay of the Holy Family (see pp. 65 and 68). —DA

Bernardino Amico

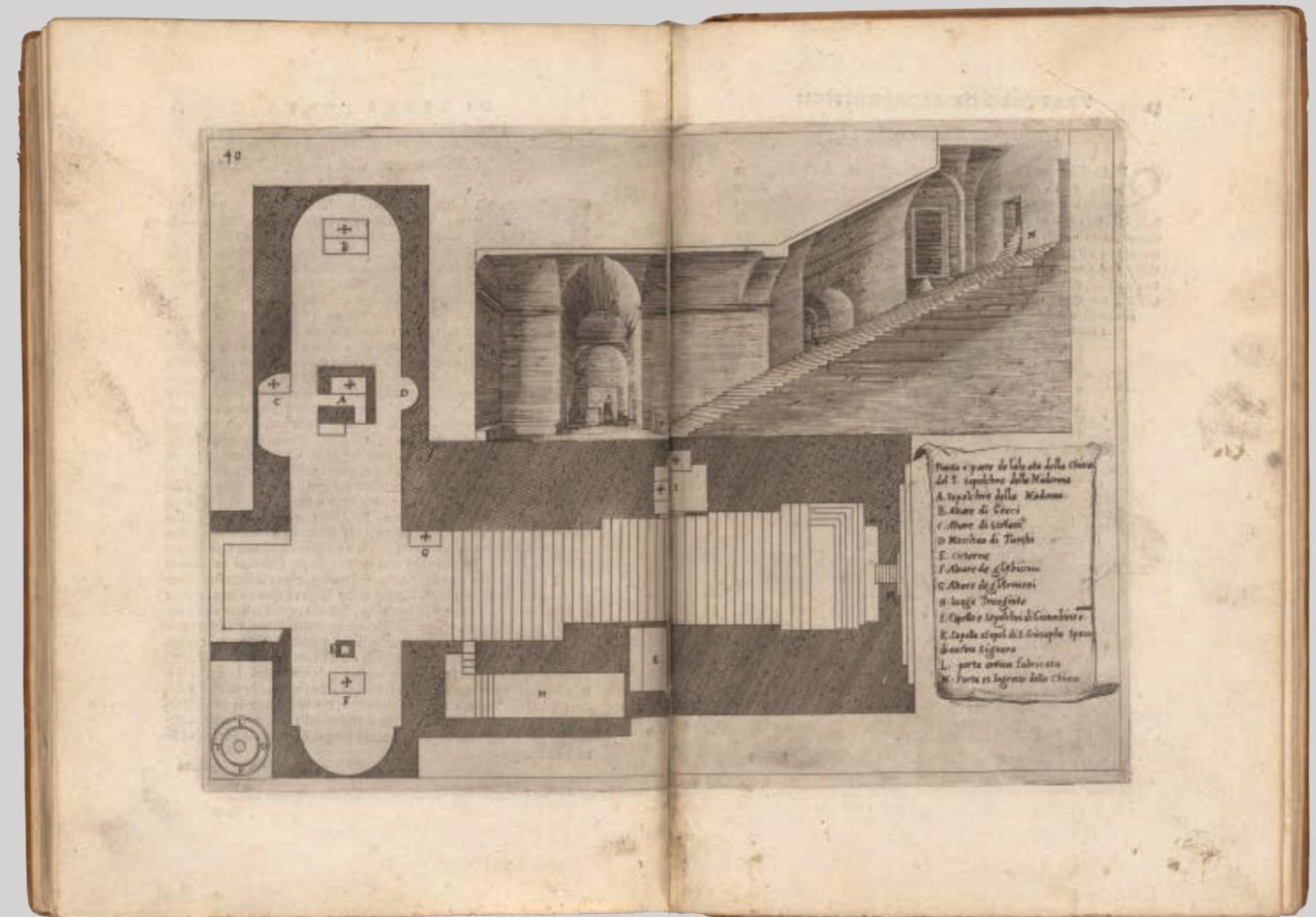
**SKETCH OF THE TOMB OF MARY IN TRATTATO DELLE
PIANTE & IMMAGINI DE SACRI EDIFIZI DI TERRA SANTA
(TREATISE OF THE PLANS AND IMAGES OF THE SACRED
BUILDINGS OF THE HOLY LAND)**

FLORENCE: P. CECCONCELLI, 1620

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, MIRIAM AND IRA D. WALLACH DIVISION OF ART,
PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS, ART AND ARCHITECTURE COLLECTION

Between 1596 and 1601 the Italian Franciscan monk Bernardino Amico was in charge of the Saint Sepulcher in Jerusalem. In 1609 he published in Rome a book with precise descriptions and drawings of sacred buildings in the Holy Land. In the second edition of this book reproduced here, which was published in Florence in 1620, the great master Jacques Callot (1592–1635) engraved Amico's designs.

The drawing illustrates the Church of the Tomb of the Virgin Mary at the foot of Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. This church has been under the control of the Franciscans since the fourteenth century. But, as the drawing clearly shows, other Christian denominations had rights inside the sacred site, where altars belonged to Armenians, Ethiopians, Greeks, and Syriacs. Furthermore, near to the tomb of Mary (indicated with the letter A in the drawing) was a prayer space for Muslims with a *mihrab*, which is referred as a “mosque” by Amico (see letter D). Both Christians and Muslims have attended this underground church for several centuries. Today, some Muslim women continue to pray in this sanctuary. —DA





Ishaq ibn Ibrahim
al-Nishāpūrī Qazwin,
Jesus with food from
heaven, in *Qisas al-Anbiyā*
(Tales of the Prophets),
ca. 1580 (detail, see p. 85)

Prophets and Sacred Sites: The Islamic Tradition

Rachel Milstein

In the Qur'an, the Old and the New Testaments are referred to as early versions of the word of God, and the ancient Jews are described as pre-Islamic monotheists. In his public sermons, the Prophet Muhammad often mentioned Biblical figures and narratives without mentioning the most important details, counting on the public's acquaintance with the stories if not with the texts. Islam thus introduced Jewish and Christian hagiographic traditions, which were further developed and elaborated through religious and intellectual contacts in Baghdad and other cultural centers.¹

Along with oral and written traditions, the growing Islamic civilization incorporated popular customs and religious cults, among which visitation to holy sites took a prominent place. Many of these holy sites commemorate miracles, burials, or even

¹ See Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, "Tawrāt," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., ed. Peri Bearman, et al. (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2012), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1203.

a temporary presence of past holy men, mainly Biblical figures. The list of these so-called Perfect Men (“prophets”) includes many that are not considered to be prophets strictly within the biblical narrative, such as the fathers of the Hebrew nation, King David and King Solomon, John the Baptist and his alleged father Zacharias. In Islam, however, these saintly figures are important as pre-Islamic prophets, models of moral and political perfection (in the case of kings), and as archetypes of the Prophet Muhammad and—for the Shiite—the caliph ‘Ali and his sons, Hasan and Husain.²

The most important prophets, according to the Islamic traditional order, are: Adam, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Solomon, John the Baptist, Jesus, Khidr, and Alexander (who, even if not always recognized as a prophet, is included in their list). First and foremost among them is King Solomon, who is said to have traveled on his flying carpet from one end of his empire to the other, who talked the language of the animal world, and who found water in the desert. Thus, the name of King Solomon is attached to various sites all over the Muslim world, mostly mountains and natural water pools.³ The memory of Adam is connected with ‘Arafat, in Arabia; Abraham, together with his son Ishmael, is linked with the Ka’ba in Mecca; Joseph with the Nile; Moses with Mount Sinai; and Jesus with Jerusalem. Khidr, a mysterious figure of eternal life, is connected with both seas and deserts—his living abode is unknown—and he appears, incognito, in distant parts of the world. Alexander the Great, whose conquests stretched from Andalusia to India, is believed to have made a pilgrimage to the Ka’ba, to have explored the dark and uninhabited part of the world, ascended to the sky, and dived in the ocean. Localized in cultic sites, the heroic and saintly feats of these mythological figures were occasionally depicted in illustrated manuscripts, mainly in Iran and the Ottoman Empire, from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries.

The Persian and Ottoman texts, wherein the illustrations were introduced, are of various natures: historiography, hagiography, epic and didactic poetry, or even schematic, map-like depictions of lands, towns, pilgrimage sites, and all sorts of “natural” wonders. Obviously, the content and the styles of depiction vary according to the literary and the historical context of the paintings, which can be moralistic, poetic, “historical,” or magical. Most of the known paintings of saintly stories are depicted in manuscripts of *Qisas al-Anbiyā* (“Tales of the Prophets”), which were produced in a late sixteenth-century Ottoman context and contain one of three popular versions of this genre.⁴ Other illustrations of prophets are found in manuscripts including *‘Aja’ib al-Makhlūqat* (“The wonders of the created world”), various historical and hagiographical treatises such as *Siyar-i Nābi* (“The Life of the Prophet”),⁵ the Sufi poem

² See Arent Jan Wensinck, “Rasūl,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

³ See Rachel Milstein, “King Solomon’s Temple and Throne as Models in Islamic Visual Culture,” in *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem*, ed. Bianca Kühnel, Galit Noga-Banai, and Hanna Vorholt (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2014), pp. 187–94.

⁴ For more on the prophets in Islamic literature and art, see *Stories of the Prophets: Illustrated Manuscripts*

of *Qisas al-Anbiyā*, ed. Rachel Milstein, Karin Rührdanz, and Barbara Schmitz (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 1999), pp. 148–51; and Rachel Milstein, *La Bible dans l’art islamique* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2005), pp. 9–20.

⁵ The illustrated Ottoman manuscripts of this text are described in Zeren Tanındı, *Siyer-u Nebi: An Illustrated Cycle of the Life of Muhammad and Its Place in Islamic Art* (Istanbul: Hürriyet Foundation, 1984).



Ishaq ibn Ibrahim al-Nishāpūrī Qazwin, Abraham holding a knife, about to sacrifice his son Ishmael, who kneels before him, in *Qisas al-Anbiyā*, ca. 1580

Hadiqat-u Su’ada (“The Garden of Happiness”),⁶ *Fal-namah* (“Book of Divination”), and the classical, most important Persian poems:⁷ Firdausi’s *Shāhnāmah* (“The Book of King”), Nizami’s *Khamsa* (“Quintet”), and Jami’s *Haft Awrang* (“Seven Thrones”).⁸

Abraham: The Sacrifice

Abraham (Ibrahim), the father of the Arabs through his son Ishmael (Isma’il) and builder of the Ka’ba is very important to the Arabs and consequently to the entire Muslim community. Moreover, he is considered to be “God’s Friend” (*khalil Allah*) on account of his two great quests. The first one was his willingness to go through a fire ordeal in his hometown Harran in order to show to his pagan compatriots the

⁶ Illustrated manuscripts of this text are described in Rachel Milstein, *Miniature Painting in Ottoman Baghdad* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 1989), pp. 80–85.

⁷ For more on these albums of divinations, see Massumeh Farhad and Serpil Bağcı, *Falnama: The Book of Omens* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2009).

⁸ The luxurious sixteenth-century volume of this text is analyzed in Sultan Ibrahim Mirza’s *Haft Awrang: A Princely Manuscript from Sixteenth-Century Iran*, ed. Massumeh Farhad and Marianna Shreve Simpson (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997).

power of belief in one God, Allah. The second quest was his absolute willingness to slaughter his son in accord with God's order. The story of this sacrifice⁹ was important to the Muslim theologians, as it enabled them to justify pre-Islamic rituals related to the Ka'ba in Mecca.¹⁰

The exhibited illustration, from *Qisas al-Anbiyā*, depicts Abraham standing in the center of the foreground, his body facing his bound son, but his head and eyes turned to heaven. Abraham is dressed in a brown gown, a color usually signifying religious devotees and Sufis, and a golden flame around his head symbolizes his prophetic light (*nur al-nubuwwa*). Ishmael, haloed as well, is seen facing a rocky mountain wall, which emphasizes the feeling of a dead-end. But the knife in Abraham's hand is turned upright to the sky because, according to the story, three times the prophet tried to cut his son's neck without success, a sign from heaven that Ishmael's death was not required. Looking upward, Abraham sees the angel Gabriel (*Jibrā'il*) descending from heaven with a ram in his arms. The golden hue of the background and the unusually large flowers both recall heaven and the flowering Garden of Eden.

Another participant is depicted in the scene—a black-faced figure behind the horizon, in the upper-left corner. This is the image of Iblis (Satan) who, according to the texts, tried to incite Abraham and Ishmael to disobey God's order. However, the two prophets not only refused to listen; they actually stoned Satan with pebbles. Theologians agree that the ritualistic throwing of pebbles onto seven piles before sacrificing an animal on the last day of the Hajj commemorates the prophets' absolute resistance to Satan's temptation.¹¹

Job

Prophethood, according to Islamic theology, is an inborn potency, but in order to realize it and become Perfect Men, the prophets must fulfill at least one quest. They have to go through a symbolic death, to prove their deep belief and endurance in suffering before they are “reborn” in a higher spiritual state. This renaissance is often symbolized, in texts and paintings alike, by a new garment offered to the prophet by the angel Gabriel. The spiritual state of death is materialized by going through fire or being confined in a closed and dark space—a pit, an ark, a belly of a fish, or a trunk of tree. Purification is done in water, as in the case of Job.¹²

The Qur'an briefly mentions that the prophet Job, having been tortured by Satan, implored to Allah to release him from his suffering, so that his case would serve as a warning to the human kind.¹³ Later legends tell that his wife, Rahma, continued to take care of him even when all the others could no longer approach him. Satan, unsuccessful in his efforts to stop Job from his prayers to God, had better results with Rahma, but when she tries to convince her husband to this effect, he swore to beat her. It is at that moment that Gabriel appeared and

⁹ Qur'an XXXVII, 99–113. ¹¹

¹⁰ See R. Paret, “Ibrāhīm,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

¹¹ About the various artistic manifestation of the sacrifice, see Milstein, *La Bible dans l'art islamique*, pp. 72–75; and Milstein, Rührdanz, and Schmitz, eds., *Stories of the Prophets*, pp. 12–121 and plate XV.

¹² See A. Jeffery, “Ayyūb,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; and Milstein, Rührdanz, and Schmitz, eds., *Stories of the Prophets*, pp. 141–42.

¹³ See the Qur'an XXI, 83 and 38, 41–44.



Ishaq ibn Ibrahim al-Nishāpūrī Qazwin, Job talks with the angel Jibrā'il, who comes to minister to his afflictions, in *Qisas al-Anbiyā*, ca. 1577

instructed Job to bathe in a brook, which miraculously appeared at his feet. Healed from his wounds and purified by the water, Job received from Gabriel a gown that the latter carried from Paradise. This moment is depicted in the exhibited illustration, with Rahma standing against the frame of the painting, half-in and half-out.

Alexander Building the Iron Wall

During his journey in a far-away land, the Muslim inhabitants of that region asked Alexander the Great, then a legitimate Shah of Iran, to save them from the ravages of primitive peoples, who lived behind the mountains. World conqueror, notorious for administrating justice, Alexander ordered his men to build an impregnable wall (or a dam) between two mountains, to block the path of those primitives, who occasionally raided the cultivated lands of the civilized Muslims and ate everything. These barbarian creatures are always depicted half



Ishaq ibn Ibrahim al-Nishāpūrī Qazwin, Dhū'l-Qarnayn, the two-horned (i.e., Iskandar or Alexander the Great), accompanied by six warriors supervises the building of the wall between the known world and the lands of the Yājūj and Mājūj, in *Qisas al-Anbiyā*, ca. 1580

naked, in accord with the Muslim convictions that showing the naked body is obscene, and the pan-Asiatic tradition of distinguishing ranks by conferring gowns to the honored and undressing the contemptible. Thanks to this iron wall, the savage people, named Gog and Magog (Yajuj and Majuj) are still confined to their desert, but at the end of time, just before the Day of Judgment (the Last Judgment), according to Islam, they will break the wall, spread everywhere, and destroy the civilized world. This apocalyptic end connects Alexander with the Islamic religious speculations and justifies his inclusion in the list of prophets.¹⁴

Otherwise, the Alexander romance, which was translated from Greek and spread in the Hellenistic Near East, was eventually incorporated into the Iranian national epics. The foreign conqueror, whose image acquired a national Iranian origins and charisma, entered the classic Persian poetry as a paradigmatic philosopher-king and a just ruler, second only to King Solomon. Nevertheless, as we can see

¹⁴ For the story, its sources, and multivalent messages, see Montgomery, W. Watt, "al-Iskandar," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; and Milstein, Rührdanz, and Schmitz, eds., *Stories of the Prophets*, pp. 148–49.



Ishaq ibn Ibrahim al-Nishāpūrī Qazwin, a discussion between the prophets Moses and Khidr, in *Qisas al-Anbiyā*, ca. 1580

Ishaq ibn Ibrahim al-Nishāpūrī Qazwin, Jesus with food from heaven, in *Qisas al-Anbiyā*, ca. 1580

in the exhibited illustration, the king who searched for a higher spiritual knowledge is usually depicted wearing a (non-Muslim) crown, rather than a turban and a prophetic halo.

Moses's Encounter with al-Khidr

Medieval Islamic literature tells that in his journey to the Land of Darkness, in the inhabited part of the world, Alexander wished to employ as his guide the mythic person al-Khidr who, according to the legend, had drunk from the spring of life and knew where it was located. The Qur'an,¹⁵ on the other hand, tells that Moses and his young servant, having realized too late that they had missed the source of life, encountered a servant of God ('Abd Allah) at the meeting place of the oceans.¹⁶ The Qur'anic story may be traced to three main sources: the Gigamesh epic, the Alexander romance, and the Jewish legend of Elijah (himself a mysterious figure) and Rabbi Joshua ben Levi. The majority of later commentators identified the servant of God as al-Khidr (the green man) while other told about the prophets Ilyas (Elijah) and al-Khidr.

The text around the exhibited painting tells that the participants in this encounter were al-Khidr, Moses, and Joshua. This episode was rarely depicted by Muslim painters, and therefore the identification of the individual figures is not clear. It seems reasonable, however, to identify the man in brown, on the right side, as al-Khidr, the central

¹⁵ See Qur'an XVIII, 59–81.

¹⁶ Arent Jan Wensinck, "al-Khadir," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; and Milstein, Rührdanz, and Schmitz, eds., *Stories of the Prophets*, pp. 137–38.

figure as Moses, and the young man on the left as Joshua. The brown dress, which usually signifies Sufis and hermits, befits the image of al-Khidr, a lonely figure traveling incognito, fast as the wind, to help seafarer and caravans in the deserts. It worth adding that under Christian influence, the Near-Eastern visual image of al-Khidr is sometimes confounded with that of Saint George, and this image is particularly admired by the Druze.

Jesus: The Miracle of the Table

In the numerous Qur’anic references, as well as the following commentaries and polemic literature, the attitude of Islam toward Jesus (‘Isa) shifts from admiration and deep veneration all the way to complete negation of his divine nature. One of the names given to him in the Qur’an is Messiah (*al-Masih*), evokes his miraculous birth, his ascension to heaven, and the many miracles performed by him as a proof of his prophetic mission. The religious authorities often discussed another name of his, ‘Abd Allah (God’s servant), contradicting the Christian claim of his Divine nature, and developed the theme of his role of *mahdi* in the future apocalyptic events when he would kill the Satanic Dajjal (Anti-Christ).¹⁷

Jesus’s major miracle, according to Islamic hagiographic literature, is his power of speech immediately after his birth. One of the lesser miracles, at least in painting, is that of the “table”¹⁸—perhaps the miracle of the multiplication of the bread and the fish. The Qur’an states that in answering his apostles’ demand, Jesus caused a table set with food descending from heaven. This proved his being a true prophet. In the painting, Jesus, at the center, is dressed in an upper coat in blue over a brown gown, which recalls the visual image of other prophets. The color blue, together with his “Oriental” posture, the table with food the arrangement of his apostles brings into mind the iconography of “royal banquets,” reflecting the Near-Eastern custom of kings sharing a meal with their retinue and soldiers.

The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus (Ashab al-Kahf)

The Christian legend about seven young men in pagan Ephesus, who were obliged to flee from their town on account of their Christian faith, is also recorded in the Qur’an.¹⁹ The Qur’anic text tells that the youth and a dog in their flight ran into a cave to avoid persecution. They fell asleep for 309 years and when they woke up, one of them went out of the cave to buy food for his friend. Ignorant of the time that had passed, the young man tried to pay with coins that were no longer valid. The people of the town, who thought that the man had found a hoard of gold coins, brought him in front of the king for interrogation, and thus the miracle was disclosed. Commentators added details, such as the number of youth and names, including the name of the dog. The foreground of painting on display shows the youth and their dog sleeping in the dark cave. Above them, that is to say outside the cave, the pagan

17 See G. C. Anawati, “Isā,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; and Milstein, Rührdanz, and Schmitz, eds., *Stories of the Prophets*, pp. 158–59.

18 Qur’an V, 111–14.

19 See the Qur’an XVIII, 9–29, *surat al-Kahf*; and R. Paret, “Aṣḥāb al-Kahf,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

king who pursued them with his soldiers is seen biting his forefinger in amazement, as he suddenly loses trace of the seven sleepers.

The place of the cave was kept undisclosed in the Qur’an. In the course of time it has been connected with various locations within the Islamic world, including Jordan, Cappadocia in present-day Turkey, East Turkestan in the geography now occupied by China, and Spain. Many of these places became visitation sites. The story of the “people of the cave” assumed a magical meaning, so the alleged names of the youth and especially the dog’s name—Qitmar—were inscribed on paper talismans or engraved on magical pieces of jewelry.



Ishaq ibn Ibrahim
al-Nishāpūrī Qazwin,
Seven Sleepers of Ephesus
and their dog asleep in
a cave, in *Qisas al-Anbiyā*,
ca. 1577

Mustafa al-Zarîr

A JEWISH LEADER HOLDS UP THE GOWN OF THE JEWISH PROPHET YAHYÂ (JOHN THE BAPTIST) IN SIYAR-I NÂBI (LIFE OF THE PROPHET)

ISTANBUL, FOURTEENTH CENTURY, COPIED 1594–95
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, SPENCER COLLECTION

John the Baptist is known in Islam as the prophet Yahyâ. Several sites are believed to be the place of his martyrdom, such as Sebastia in Palestine and Damascus in Syria. According to a tradition, after he was beheaded, his head rolled until it reached Damascus, where a cathedral was built. The cathedral was later converted into the famous Umayyad Mosque in the seventh century.

This Muslim miniature shows a Jewish leader holding up the gown of the Jewish and Christian prophet Yahyâ on which the Islamic declaration of faith (*Shahada*) was said to have miraculously appeared: "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God." When the gown was cut out, the *Shahada* appeared a second time.

Siyar-I Nâbi is a fourteenth-century Ottoman epic on the Prophet Muhammad's life, whose supposed author was a Mevlevi dervish (follower of Jalâl ad-Dîn Rûmî). At the end of the fifteenth century, the Sultan Murad III (1574–1595) commissioned an illustrated copy that is considered a masterwork of Islamic art.

—MP



SEVEN SLEEPERS IN SANCTORUM SEPTEM DORMIENTIUM HISTORIA (HISTORY OF THE SEVEN HOLY SLEEPERS)

ROME: PAGLIARINIANO, 1741
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, GENERAL RESEARCH DIVISION

The Seven Sleepers were young Christians who were persecuted by the Roman emperor Decius in the third century. According to the medieval book *Golden Legend* (*Legenda Aurea* in Latin) by Jacobus da Varagine (thirteenth century), the seven sleepers fled their town of Ephesus (in what is today western Turkey) and hid themselves in a cave where they fell into a miraculous sleep for 198 years. They then awoke in the middle of the fifth century, when the empire had become Christian. Their reawakening attests to the resurrection of the body in an eschatological perspective. This miracle became very popular and known all over the Christian world.

In the seventh century, it was then adopted by Islamic tradition, mainly in the nineteenth surah of the Qur'an: "The Cave." This common narrative generated interreligious crossings and shared beliefs in many caves across the Mediterranean.

This eighteenth-century book offers reproductions of monuments related to the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. Illustrated here is a representation of the seven young sleepers lying in their holy cave. —MP



ISKANDAR AND KHIZR (ON A MULE), BOTH HOLDING SHINING GLOBES THAT LIGHT THEIR WAY THROUGH THE GLOOM, RIDE TOWARD THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE IN TARJUMAH-I SHĀHNĀMAH (BOOK OF KINGS)

ISTANBUL, 10TH CENTURY, COPIED 1616–20
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, SPENCER COLLECTION

The *Shāhnāmah* (Persian Book of Kings) is an epic poem written by the poet Firdausī between 977 and 1010. It is the longest epic poem known to have been composed by an author. It tells the history of the Persian Empire. This work was very influential throughout the history of the Persian peoples, but also of the neighboring kingdoms and empires. The Seldjuks and Ottomans were among those who were inspired by this text. This particular translation comes from seventeenth-century Ottoman lands.

In the Islamic tradition, Iskandar (identified as Alexander the Great) is a saintly leader whose armies conquered both the East and West. It is said that Iskandar set out with Khidr, who is variously portrayed as Alexander's cook, vizier, or his military general to reach the end of the world to find the water of life. Although Iskandar got lost, Khidr reached the water of life as the former was interested in self-glorification while the latter served God and therefore gained eternal life. Even though Khidr remains unnamed in the Qur'an, he is often perceived as an exemplar and a teacher of the true path by Muslim mystical movements. —KB



Fedor Grigorévich Solntsev

**SAINT GEORGE KILLING THE DRAGON IN
DREVNOSTI ROSSIISKAGO GOSUDARSTVA (ANTIQUITIES
OF THE RUSSIAN STATE)**

MOSCOW: TIP. A. SEMENA, 1849–53

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, RARE BOOK DIVISION

This Russian image is an example of the classical iconography of Saint George slaying the dragon, a symbol of evil. According to the legend, Saint George, a soldier in the Roman army at the time of Diocletian in the third to fourth centuries, was martyred for refusing to renounce Christianity. Accordingly, he became known and venerated as Saint George. Later on, the legend of slaying the dragon became part of the hagiography of Saint George with the earliest depiction in a Georgian text of the eleventh century. It is also said that this myth was borrowed from the legend of Saint Theodore of Amasea who was martyred in the early fourth century.

A church in Lydda (Lod, Israel), where Saint George's martyrdom would have taken place, is considered a holy site and is attended by several Christian denominations and Muslims, mainly on the sixteenth of November to commemorate the translation of his relics there. Nowadays some Jewish immigrants from Russia who have kept ties to Orthodox Christianity also participate in this pilgrimage. Saint George is venerated as a miracle worker who does not differentiate between religions and is a powerful figure of protection. —KB



Agostino Giustiniani

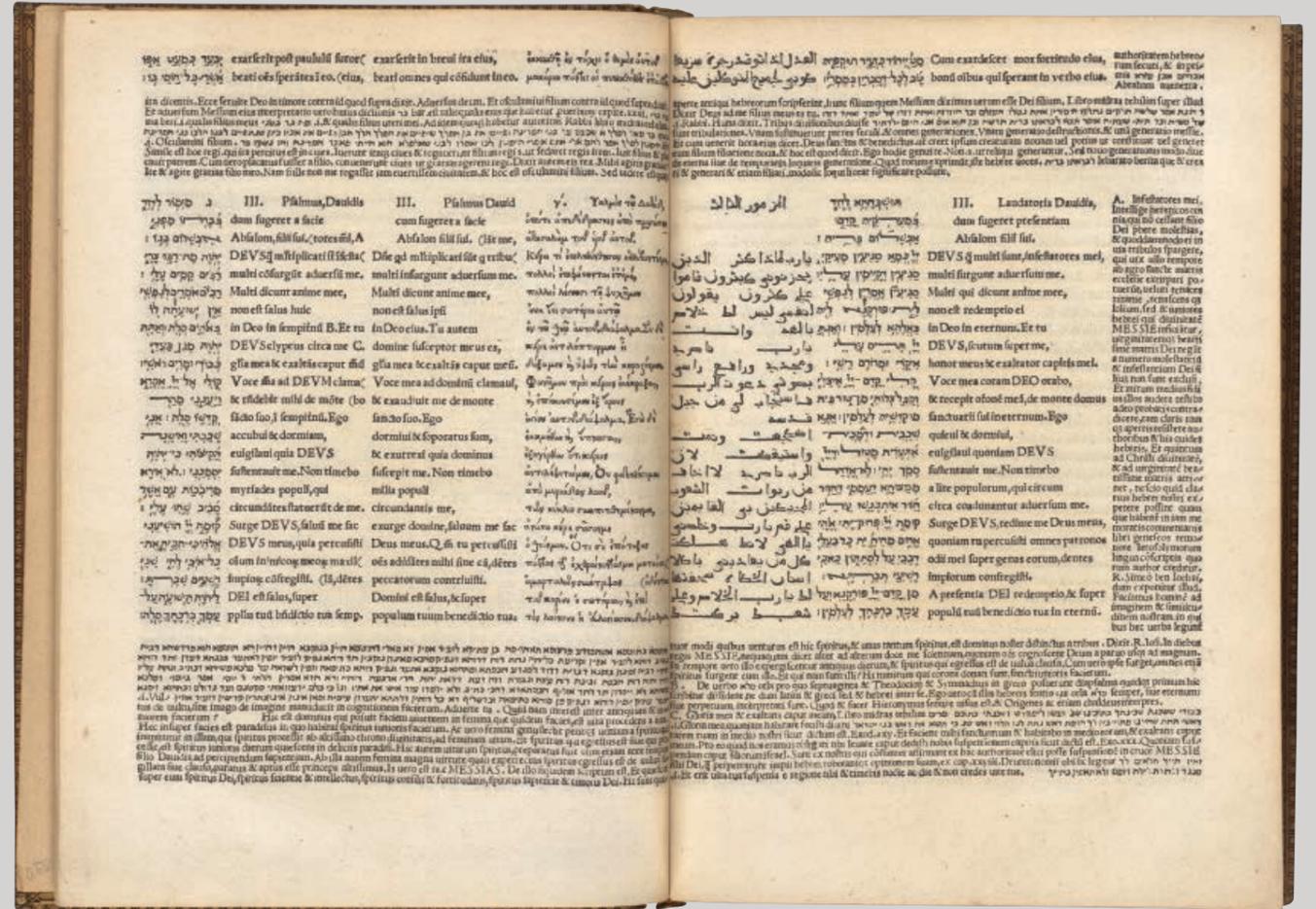
PSALTERIUM, HEBRAEUM, GRAECUM, ARABICUM, CHALDAEUM (PSALTER, IN HEBREW, GREEK, ARABIC, AND ARAMAIC)

GENOA: PETRUS PAULUS PORRUS, 1516
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The Psalms' composer is supposed to be King David. This rare book is the first-known multilingual psalter and represents an eloquent example of the fertility of translations between religious and socio-linguistic groups.

The pages of the book contain eight parallel columns offering versions of the Psalms in Hebrew, a Latin paraphrase, the Vulgate Latin, the Septuagint Greek, Arabic, Aramaic ("Chaldean"), a Latin paraphrase, and the editor's scholia (gloss).

The eminent linguist Bishop Giustiniani (1470–1536) directly financed the publication of this multilingual psalter. Later he would become the Arabic and Hebrew tutor for King François I of France. —MP



PART 2

Itinerary of a Middle
Ages Treasure
between Three Religions

The Morgan Picture Bible: A Preamble

The Morgan Library & Museum's celebrated picture Bible (MS M.638) is one of the greatest visualizations of Old Testament events to exist. Some of the stories and their heroes are well known, but there are others who led the Israelites in their quest for the Promised Land, stories that resonate to this day. The stories were popularized when they became part of the Christian Bible and the Qur'an. They also became part of the fabric of history when they formed parts of medieval genealogies and world chronicles that traced royal lineages to the time of Jesus Christ and, ultimately, to Adam and Eve.

The manuscript was originally conceived in Paris around 1250 as a series of especially selected Old Testament scenes, beginning with the creation. The Bible's illustrations were initially created without captions. Thereafter, the manuscript began an incredible journey, passing through Christian, Muslim, and Jewish hands, and traversing four continents. These later owners added Latin, Persian, and Judeo-Persian inscriptions, giving rise to the unique ecumenical character of the manuscript. A typical page consists of four scenes in two registers, which are read from left to right, beginning at the top. While the Latin inscriptions are placed above and below the appropriate scenes, the Persian and Judeo-Persian inscriptions appear squeezed in, often in the margins. The four scenes from the leaf illustrated within this publication (see pp. 114–19) are accompanied with English translations to give a sense of the nature of the inscriptions. No attempt is made, however, to offer Christian and Muslim exegesis on the Old Testament stories.

Whether you call it the Morgan Picture Bible, the Crusader Bible, Old Testament Miniatures, the Book of Kings, the Maciejowski Bible, the Shah 'Abbas Bible, or *Imagines Biblicae*, or whether the manuscript was made for King Louis IX in Paris about 1250 or, as few others have argued, for some wealthy nobleman in the northern provinces, one fact is beyond dispute. It is one of the greatest illuminated manuscripts, not only of the thirteenth century, but of all time. The pictures do not actually illustrate the whole Bible, but only select portions of Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and Samuel, ending with an extensive life of David. Indeed, over forty percent of the pages contain David scenes. Evident in the picture book's forty-six folios, which are decorated with some 346 episodes, is an unparalleled commitment to execution and detail. The lively depictions of battles and accurate renderings of medieval armor are especially remarkable, and the miniatures are so compelling that they are among the most frequently reproduced images in the Library's collection.

William M. Voelkle



God leads Adam and Eve to Paradise, pointing out the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, from which they must not eat; at the foot of the tree are the four rivers of Paradise. The Morgan Picture Bible, Paris, ca. 1250. The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, MS M.638, fol. 1v, purchased by J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1916 (detail, see p. 106)

Shared Sacred Stories and the Morgan Picture Bible

William M. Voelke

Although there are many gaps in the Morgan Picture Bible's history, with nearly five hundred and fifty years unaccounted for, few manuscripts can claim such a diverse and fascinating provenance. The manuscript itself contains no evidence of its original owner, though King Louis IX (1214–1270), builder of the Sainte-Chapelle (consecrated April 26, 1248) and leader of the Seventh Crusade (1248–1254), has frequently been suggested as the probable candidate.¹

The Morgan Picture Bible has often been considered within the context of the monarch's program

¹ The manuscript has long been associated with Louis IX and his court. See Sydney C. Cockerell and John Plummer, eds., *Old Testament Miniatures: A Medieval Picture Book with 283 Paintings from the Creation to the Story of David* (New York: George Braziller, 1969), pp. 3, 6; Daniel Weiss et al., *The Morgan Crusader Bible Commentary* (Lucerne, 1999), pp. 229–38; and William Noel and Daniel Weiss, eds., *The Book of Kings: Art, War, and the Morgan Library's Medieval Picture Bible* (London: Third Millennium Publishing Limited, 2002), pp. 14–18. For a discussion regarding an origin in the northern provinces see Alison Stones, "Questions of Style and Provenance in the Morgan Picture Bible," in *Between the Picture and the Word*, ed. Colum Hourihane

(University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press; Princeton, N.J.: Index of Christian Art, Princeton University, 2005), pp. 112–21. For the influence of Byzantine Old Testament miniatures see Harvey Stahl, "Old Testament Illustration during the Reign of St. Louis: The Morgan Picture Book and the New Biblical Cycles," in *Il Medio Oriente e l'Occidente nell'arte del XIII secolo*, *Atti del XXIV Congresso internazionale di Storia dell'Arte*, vol. II, ed. Hans Belting (Bologna: Clueb, 1982), pp. 79–93, and his unpublished PhD thesis, "The Iconographic Sources of the Old Testament Miniatures, Pierpont Morgan Library M.638" (New York: New York University, 1974).

of the stained glass of Sainte-Chapelle, his other manuscript commissions, and propaganda for his crusading activities. The size and luxury of the book also suggest high patronage, as do the considerable intellectual, iconographic, pictorial, artistic, and financial resources needed to plan and execute the work. The story of the Levite and his wife, for example, is rarely depicted (fols. 15v–16v), yet also occurs in French manuscripts of the thirteenth century, more specifically the Psalter of Saint Louis (Paris, BnF, MS lat 10525, fol. 63v), and a series of Moralized Bibles indisputably made in Paris. The earliest of the Moralized Bibles (ca. 1220) was made for Blanche of Castile (1188–1252), the mother of Louis IX (Vienna, ONB MS 2554, fols. 64v–65v), who also commissioned several other manuscripts for her family members. Indeed, the seven scenes devoted to the Levite story in Blanche's copy provided the thematic sequence for the seven scenes in the Morgan Picture Bible, issuing further evidence that the illuminator of the latter saw the former in Paris.²

The biblical people of Judah were compared in France to Louis's Christian kingdom, and the Capetian rulers before him had already been considered the successors of the biblical kings of Judah. Such connections were apparent in the picture book, where biblical kings are anointed on a faldstool, the usual coronation seat for Capetian kings. It is thus no accident that Israelite forces, seen as precursors to the crusaders, should be shown in the manuscript wearing thirteenth-century French armor, and that the biblical kings should have fleur-de-lis crowns and scepters, reinforcing the associations with royal patronage. Louis solicited crusaders from the north, and some of the soldiers in the manuscript bear heraldic shields with northern elements. The Morgan Picture Bible therefore represented both biblical and salvation history.

Since the Capetian kings saw themselves as the successors to the God-chosen kings of Judah, they claimed divine sanction for their own sacred kingship. Thereafter Louis himself was considered the new Solomon.³ In 1238 Louis purchased from Baldwin II (1217–1273), emperor of Constantinople, some of the most prized relics of Christ's Passion, including the Crown of Thorns.⁴ After the relics arrived in 1239, Paris became regarded as the New Jerusalem and the Promised Land, and the French as the Chosen People. In 1241 he purchased a second group of relics from Baldwin II. It was thus only natural that after the dedication in 1248 of Sainte-Chapelle, which was built to house those relics, he set off on his crusade to free the Holy Land from the infidels. The Morgan Picture Bible has been dated around 1244–54, overlapping with Louis's Seventh Crusade. It is even possible that he might have taken the manuscript, a kind of portable Sainte-Chapelle, with him, along with his wife Margaret and children, some hundred ships, and

² See William M. Voelkle, "The Story of the Levite (Judges 19: 1–29), Paris, and the Morgan Library's Crusader Bible (MS M.638)," *Tributes to Adelaide Bennett Hagens: Manuscripts, Iconography, and the Late Medieval Viewer*, ed. Pamela A. Patton and Judith K. Golden (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2017), pp. 177–89.

³ See Daniel H. Weiss, *Art and Crusade in the Age of Saint Louis* (Cambridge, 1998), especially chapter 3, and Alyce A. Jordan, *Visualizing Kingship in the Windows of the Sainte-Chapelle* (Turnhout, 2002), pp. 16–29.

⁴ For a list of relics see Jonathan Riley-Smith, "The Politics of War: France and the Holy Land," in *The Book of Kings*, pp. 76–77.

Blanche of Castile instructing her son, King Louis IX (above), and cleric dictating to scribe (below). Moralized Bible fragment, Paris, ca. 1235. The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, MS M.240, fol. 8r, purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1906



thirty-five-thousand men.⁵ Although the crusade proved to be a disaster (Louis was captured and held for ransom), he remained in Acre for four years before returning home. He then attempted a second crusade, but fell ill and died near Tunis on August 25, 1270. Nearly thirty years later, in 1297, he was canonized by Pope Boniface VIII (1235–1303), becoming the only French king to achieve sainthood.

Louis, as the owner of an elaborate Moralized Bible, would certainly have been familiar with hundreds of Old Testament scenes, all of which were identified with inscriptions. The Morgan Library and Museum owns the last gathering of his Moralized Bible (MS M.240, fol. 8v), where a pictorial colophon shows the boy king (who had ascended the throne in 1226, at age twelve) being instructed by Blanche of Castile, his mother. Such a familiarity with Old Testament scenes would have been extremely helpful in identifying the scenes in the Morgan Picture Bible, as the first owner would not have had the benefit of the Latin captions, which were added later to the manuscript. Indeed, the series of stories in the Morgan Picture Bible, with their emphasis

⁵ Daniel H. Weiss has made a strong case that Louis took the Oxford Moralized Bible with him to Acre, where it was a pictorial source for the Arsenal Old Testament, in "The Three Solomon Portraits in

the Arsenal Old Testament and the Construction of Meaning in Crusader Painting," *Arte medievale*, 2nd series, 6 (1992), pp. 24–27. Also see his *Art and Crusade in the Age of Saint Louis*, pp. 115–53.



God creates Eve and leads Adam and Eve into Paradise (left); Eve hands the forbidden fruit to Adam (right). The Morgan Picture Bible, fol. 1v (detail)

on kings, would have provided Louis valuable lessons on the nature of governance and the responsibilities of a ruler.

While certain stylistic elements, such as a tendency for naturalism, can be found in the northern provinces, none of the half-dozen artists responsible for the miniatures have been found in works produced there, and no other surviving French manuscript of the time seems to approach it in quality, grandeur of design, and breadth of perfection. Sir Sydney C. Cockerell (1867–1962) suggested that the miniatures reflect the work of wall painters that has not survived,⁶ though recent research by historian Emily Davenport Guerry on the damaged paintings in the Sainte-Chapelle have yielded stylistic parallels.⁷ In any case, some fifty years after the bible was completed, it evidently went to Italy,⁸ where the Bolognese-style initials and Latin inscriptions were added. The inscriptions were not always helpful, and in fourteen cases the scenes were not correctly identified.⁹

It is the partially obliterated inscription¹⁰ at the bottom of the first page of the manuscript that provides the name of the earliest documented owner, Cardinal Bernard Maciejowski (1548–1608), who is additionally described as the Bishop of Cracow, Duke of Siewierz, and Senator of the Kingdom of Poland. The inscription must date from 1604 because he was elevated to cardinal early that year and became Primate

⁶ Cockerell, *Old Testament Miniatures*, p. 21.

⁷ As initially reported in Emily Davenport Guerry's lecture "Louis IX, Robert Branner, and the Wall Paintings of the Sainte-Chapelle" (Robert Branner Forum, Columbia University, March 26, 2013), and her unpublished dissertation "The Wall Paintings in the Sainte-Chapelle" (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2013), pp. 125–33, plates pp. 526–36. Her monograph on the subject is forthcoming from Harvey Miller Publishers in 2018.

⁸ If Louis owned the manuscript, it might then have passed to his younger brother, Charles I of Anjou (1226–1285), founder of the Angevin dynasty in Naples by conquest in 1266.

⁹ The instances are cited in Cockerell, *Old Testament Miniatures*, p. 6, n. 7. See also Noel, "The First Iconographer of the Morgan Picture Bible," in *The Book of Kings*, pp. 108–19.

¹⁰ "Bernard Maciejowski, Cardinal Priest of the Holy Roman Church, Bishop of Cracow, Duke of Siewierz, and Senator of the Kingdom of Poland/ with sincere wishes offers this gift to the supreme King of the Persians at Cracow the mother city of the kingdom of Poland on the seventh of September 1604." The translation is taken from Weiss, *The Morgan Crusader Bible Commentary*, p. 227.

Portrait of Cardinal Maciejowski, Cracow, Franciscan Monastery



Portrait of Shah 'Abbas. Sydney Cockerell sent this image to Belle da Costa Greene on November 9, 1927, as a testimony to his continued interest in the bible. The miniature (ca. 1615), attributed to Bishn Dás, is now in the Middle East Department, The British Museum, London, Museum No. 1920.0917.0.13.2. The image is stored in the Morgan Library's folder for MS M.638



of Poland later that year, a title not mentioned in the inscription. He may have acquired the manuscript during one of his trips to Italy. He studied for the priesthood in Rome, where he was ordained, and returned there in 1587 on behalf of Emperor Sigismund III. The inscription also records that he gave the manuscript to the "supreme king of the Persians" on September 7, 1604. The unnamed monarch would have been Shah 'Abbas I (1571–1629), who became Shah at age sixteen in 1587. He moved his capital in 1598 from Qazvin to Isfahan, creating one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

The circumstances of the gift are preserved in an extensive printed account of the papal mission Clement VIII (1536–1605) sent to 'Abbas to secure tolerance toward Christians and seek help against the Turks, their common enemy.¹¹ The diplomatic mission was led by the Discalced Carmelite friars Paul Simon of Mary Jesus, John Thaddeus of San Elisha, and Vincent of Saint Francis. When the mission decided it was safer to go by land rather than sea, they stopped in Cracow where they were received by the cardinal¹² and Sigismund for dinner and given presents suitable for the Shah. The cardinal offered the Morgan Picture Bible. After three and a half years on the road, the manuscript reached Isfahan on December 2, 1607.¹³ The manuscript was presented to the Shah on January 3, 1608. The cardinal did not live long enough to receive

¹¹ Cockerell, *Old Testament Miniatures*, p. 7, gives the reference: Isidorus a S. Joseph, Petrus a S. Andrea, *Historia generalis fratrum discalceatorum*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1668, 1671).

¹² Clement VIII would have known the cardinal, he even nominated Maciejowski for the position.

¹³ Part of the delay had to do with the deaths of Clement VIII and his successor Leo XI in March and April 1605, requiring a return to Cracow for new presentation letters from Paul V, who was elected Pope on May 16, 1605.



Illustration from the Roxburghe Club's facsimile (1927) showing the Shah's seal to the left of the chimney at the top of the page. Bathsheba learns of Uriah's death and her marriage to David (top); Birth of Bathsheba's son (bottom left); the prophet Nathan tells David of God's anger and his punishment, the death of Bathsheba's newborn, to which he points (bottom right). The Morgan Picture Bible, fol. 42v

a letter of gratitude, for he died sixteen days after the manuscript was received by Shah 'Abbas.

The Shah's ownership was also specifically indicated in the manuscript, for his seal was once visible in the upper-left corner of folio 42v. The seal, apparently mistaken as an ink smear, was erased sometime after 1927, for it can be seen in the Roxburghe Club facsimile, the first extensive publication on the manuscript.¹⁴ The seal is inscribed with the words "Shah in Shah 'Abbas," or "Abbas, King of Kings."¹⁵ According to the detailed printed account previously referred to,

¹⁴ A close inspection of the Roxburghe edition revealed yet another erasure, on the lower right-hand corner of folio 30, a Roman numeral I and a symbol resembling a fleur-de-lis. The same system of notation is still preserved on folios 31 and 32, but with Roman numerals II and III. These certainly existed quite early because the Persian inscriptions avoided them. Cockerell believed they were folio numbers because, when counting the missing leaf after folio 11, the leaves would originally have been folios 31 to 33. But Cockerell did not notice that folio 42 and the first excised leaf in the Bibliothèque nationale de France also contained

Roman numerals, namely I and III, as can be seen in my collation diagram (see note 11). Thus the two leaves would originally have been folios 43 and 45, and not 41 and 43. Clearly they were not folio numbers but quire and leaf signatures. The rest were evidently cut off during a later and severe trimming. Since there were originally no catchwords, some system of ordering the leaves and quires would have been needed.

¹⁵ For the seal see M. S. Simpson, "Shah 'Abbas and His Picture Bible," in *The Book of Kings*, p. 140, n. 26. For the reception of the manuscript in Persia, see pp. 121-41.

The First Four Days of Creation (Separation of Light from Darkness and Fall of Satan, Separation of Waters from the Firmament, Creation of Plants, Creation of the Son, Moon, and Stars) with the inscription of Maciejowski's presentation (bottom). The Morgan Picture Bible, fol. 1r



Father Paul Simon first presented the Shah with a Gospel Book and a Euclid written in Arabic. This was followed by a

"very ancient Bible History, contained in one volume, and that a wide and very great one, marvelously adorned with figures and pictures to fit each incident, all of vermilion and other suitable colors heightened and resplendent with gold and silver, which His Eminence the Cardinal of Cracow had given them when they passed through that city." The Shah extended suitable thanks, but when he received the Gospel Book he said he had asked for a picture showing Saint Michael the Archangel treading a horrible monster underfoot. When Father Simon then showed him the fallen angels in the Bible History the Shah pretended not to know the identity of the prostrate red demon beneath the Creator, asking "what on earth is this most loathly beast?"



Moses uses his staff to close the waters of the Red Sea, drowning pharaoh and his troops (top); the Jews sing a song of praise to the Lord, and Moses asks the help of the Lord to make the waters of Marah potable (bottom). The Morgan Picture Bible, fol. gr

When the father “replied that it was the Devil, he mockingly added with a little smile, you don’t say so. I quite thought it was the Turk!” Then, exchanging jest for earnest, he turned over the sacred pages with care and admiration, and, consigning them into the hands of the Mahmandar or Royal Chamberlain, he gave orders that he should take an expert Mullah to where our missionaries were staying and get from them the meaning of the pictures and insert it in the Persian tongue below each one of them.¹⁶

The versos of the leaves were then foliated in Arabic numerals, starting from the back, as if the manuscript was Persian. (The numbers are in the upper-left corners.)

Sometime later, Cockerell suggested it was before the Shah’s death, three leaves containing the story of Absalom’s rebellion were removed. Cockerell argued that the subject would have provided an

¹⁶ The above texts and translations are taken verbatim from Cockerell, *Old Testament Miniatures*, pp. 12–13. According to Simpson (p. 140, n. 24), there is some question about the participation of a Mullah:

since the Carmelites were staying with the Augustinians a Persian speaking member of that order may have been involved.

inappropriate model for the Shah’s son.¹⁷ On the other hand, the page illustrating Absalom’s death, shown on the verso of the detached leaf now in the J. Paul Getty Museum (83.MA.55), and which formerly belonged to Cockerell,¹⁸ could also have served as a powerful lesson for one who wished to usurp his father’s throne. A more likely scenario was that he removed the leaves after February 1615 when he expressed great regret and remorse following the execution of his son, the crown prince, Muhammad Baqir Mirza, for treason. In any case, the two other leaves with Absalom scenes are the conjoint leaves now preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (ms. nouv. acq. lat. 2294, fols. 2, 3).¹⁹ The story of Absalom’s rebellion and death would have reminded him of his own deed, the result of unwarranted suspicion. Two other leaves were also removed and remain missing, one following folio nine (with scenes from Exodus and Joshua) and another after folio forty-two (the conjoint of the Getty leaf). A second Arabic foliation, which did not include the missing leaves, was then made. The two foliations permit the reconstruction of the manuscript before it left Cracow.

The bold Arabic number on the verso of the first leaf is forty-three, confirmed by the Persian inscription below: “It has 43 leaves.” But a closer inspection reveals that the original folio number was forty-eight. The eight is the inverted “v.” Thus, when ‘Abbas received the manuscript it had eight gatherings of six leaves each. Nancy Turner, a conservator at the J. Paul Getty Museum, observed in 1997 that some gilding restorations were apparently already made before the book left Cracow, as they occur on both folio forty-two, still preserved in the manuscript, and the detached leaf in the Getty Museum.²⁰ Since both the beginning and end of the book are similarly damaged, the physical evidence would suggest that there was no protective ninth gathering at that time. If one did exist, as some scholars have maintained, it must have been removed early on.²¹

In any case, the pictorial cycle does end with the killing of Sheba, the last chief of the Absalom insurrection, and thus a united monarchy. Since David had appointed Solomon as his successor before his death, the latter is not frequently depicted. If the book was made for Louis IX, as compelling circumstantial evidence suggests, he could have seen himself as the new and living Solomon, which may explain why Solomon is neither depicted in the manuscript or in the *Saint Louis Psalter* (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, ms. lat. 10525).²² Daniel Weiss has gone even further, making the case that Louis was seen as the true Solomon, and that Sainte-Chapelle could be seen as the new Temple of Solomon, where the Ark of the Covenant was replaced by the *Grande*

¹⁷ Cockerell, *Old Testament Miniatures*, p. 15.

¹⁸ Cockerell recorded in his diary on April 21, 1910, that he received the leaf he saw on Friday from Durlacher Brothers (142 New Bond Street) for £200. He had also heard about the existence of another, which, however, was never located. Cockerell sold his leaf for £2,000 on December 2, 1956, to H. P. Kraus, the New York bookseller, who, in turn, sold it to Peter Ludwig. The Ludwig Collection of manuscripts was sold en bloc to the J. Paul Getty Museum.

¹⁹ Jules Maciet gave them to the Bibliothèque nationale de France in 1891, but they were already exhibited in 1882.

²⁰ Weiss, *The Morgan Crusader Bible*, p. 252.

²¹ Cockerell, *Old Testament Miniatures*, pp. 5, 15.
²² Louis’s patronage of the Psalter is also based on circumstantial evidence. See Harvey Stahl, *Picturing Kingship, History and Painting in the Psalter of Saint Louis* (University Park, 2008), pp. 1–3, where he dates it in the mid-1260s. On the other hand, see Patricia Stirnemann and Marcel Thomas, *Der Psalter Ludwigs der Heiligen Ms. Lat. 10525 der Bibliothèque nationale de France*, in the series *Glanzlichter der Buchkunst*, Band 20 (Graz, 2011), p. 71, where she proposes it was made for Philippe III (Louis IX’s son and successor) and Marie de Brabant for their marriage in 1274.

Châsse, which contained over a dozen relics of Christ's Passion, notably the crown of thorns, and thus symbolized the New Covenant.²³ The Ark was an Old Testament reliquary, as it contained not only the two Tablets of the Law, but also Aaron's rod and a golden pot of manna (Hebrews 9:4). In the manuscript, the Ark is often shown with a fleur-de-lis finial. Indeed, Louis's legacy was that, among other things, of an ideal sovereign. Pope Boniface VIII explicitly compared him with Solomon, adapting even words which were written of him in the Old Testament.²⁴

If 'Abbas showed the Morgan Picture Bible to his court artists, such as Aqa Riza, it did not seem to influence their work, although they did use European prints.²⁵ After the death of 'Abbas in 1629, the throne passed to his grandson Shah Safi, and then to his son 'Abbas II. Presumably the manuscript went with the throne.

Later, perhaps when the Afghans conquered Isfahan in 1722, the royal library and treasury were looted. At some point the manuscript fell into the hands of a Persian-Jew, and the Judeo-Persian inscriptions were added. These inscriptions, by two distinct hands, do not occur on the excised leaves. They are not simply translations of the Latin and Persian inscriptions, for in several cases they represent corrections of the Latin captions.²⁶

The Morgan Picture Bible was subsequently owned by John d'Athanasi, a Greek living in Cairo who secured Egyptian antiquities for English collectors. In 1833 he put it up at an unnamed sale at Sotheby's (March 16, lot 201), where it was listed as "Historiae ex vetere testamento." The book's binding was not described but it presumably had the brown sheepskin cover that Cockerell described as "not later than the middle of the eighteenth century," and made in a place where there was a European presence. He saw nothing oriental in the binding, said the sides were plain, and that there was some simple gold tooling on the back.²⁷ Seymour de Ricci, who catalogued the manuscript as "Imagines Biblicae" in his *Census of 1937*, merely wrote that the book was in an "old oriental leather binding."²⁸

The manuscript sold for 255 guineas to the London dealers Payne and Foss, who then sold it to Sir Thomas Phillipps. With a collection of some sixty-thousand manuscripts, Phillipps described

23 Weiss, *Art and Crusade in the Age of Saint Louis*, pp. 53–74. It may be noted that representations of the Ark of the Covenant in the manuscript are often adorned with crosses (fol. 19v) or a fleur-de-lis finial (fol. 39v).

24 See M. Cecilia Gaposchkin, *The Making of Saint Louis, Kingship, Sanctity, and Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 2008), p. 53.

25 See Gary Schwartz, "Between Court and Company, Dutch Artists in Persia," and Axel Langer, "European Influences on Seventeenth-Century Persian Painting, Of Handsome Europeans, Naked Ladies, and Parisian Timepieces," in *The Fascination of Persia, The Persian-European Dialogue in Seventeenth-Century Art & Contemporary Art from Tehran*, ed. Axel Langer (Zurich, 2013), pp. 152–237.

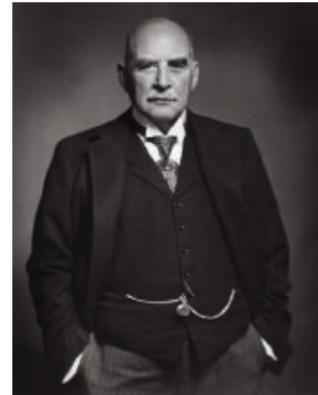
26 English translations of the Latin, Persian, and Judeo-Persian inscriptions were published for the first time in the commentary volume accompanying the Faksimile Verlag publication, for which see Weiss, *The*

Morgan Crusader Bible: Eran Lupu translated the Latin (pp. 299–326); Susan Babaie the Persian (pp. 327–52); and Vera Basch Moreen the Judeo-Persian (pp. 353–76).

V. Moreen discusses the shortcomings of the Judeo-Persian inscriptions. A noteworthy exception was the inscription on folio 13v, which correctly pointed out that it was Jephthah's daughter, and not Gideon's, that was represented. See also Noel, "The First Iconographer of the Morgan Picture Bible," pp. 109–19.

27 Cockerell, *Old Testament Miniatures*, p. 16.

28 S. de Ricci, *Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada II* (New York, 1937), p. 1475. Probably not long afterward Marguerite Duprez Lahey, Morgan's binder, rebound it in blind-tooled old blue cape levant, her favorite leather. It was made from the skin of goats that were native to the Cape of Good Hope. See *The Fine Bindings of Marguerite Duprez Lahey* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1952), p. 6, no. 8. The manuscript is currently disbound.



Photograph of John Pierpont Morgan, Jr. (1867–1943) by Fayer of Vienna and London, ca. 1930. The Morgan Library & Museum, New York

himself as the "perfect vello-maniac."²⁹ After his death in 1872, having made no plans for the disposition of the collection, Thirlestaine House and its contents were left in trust to Katharine, his youngest daughter and wife of Reverend John E. A. Fenwick.³⁰ His will also gave, after Katharine, a life interest to her third son, Thomas Fitzroy Fenwick, who proved to be a good manager of the collection in Cheltenham. Although the will stipulated that no book could be sold, judicial approval was granted, because of financial need, to gradually sell items after 1885. Once the doors were opened, scholars and collectors were admitted.³¹

As interest in the picture bible mounted, including several failed attempts to purchase it for private collections,³² Belle da Costa Greene bought the manuscript for the library of John Pierpont Morgan, Jr.³³ Morgan later produced a lavish facsimile of the picture bible as his Roxburghe Club obligation and hired Cockerell to do much of the commentary; Cockerell also wrote an authoritative account of the manuscript's history.³⁴ The Roxburghe publication was actual size, largely black and white, but only available to club members.³⁵

Exactly forty years later in 1969, George Braziller published *Old Testament Miniatures*, the first color facsimile of the manuscript, making it available to scholars, libraries, and a wider public. John Plummer wrote the preface, but the introduction and legends repeated those by Cockerell in the Roxburghe Club facsimile. The third facsimile, published in 1998 by Faksimile Verlag Luzern, set yet another standard, especially for its faithful rendering of color and use of gold: they bound the book in a stamped leather binding based on that of a contemporary stamped binding of a Moralized Bible in Oxford (Bodleian Library, M.270b). But that facsimile quickly went out of print. Thanks to Scriptorium of Valencia, a facsimile of this incomparable manuscript is again available. Now, with the advent of The Morgan Library & Museum's online exhibitions, the manuscript is available to all in high-resolution images, along with descriptions and English translations of the Latin, Persian, and Judeo-Persian inscriptions.

29 As he often did, Phillipps added his manuscript number, "8025," in the book. The manuscript, however, did not appear in his printed catalogue because Phillipps had already mistakenly assigned the same number to another manuscript, an English deed of the fourteenth century.

30 A. N. L. Munby, *The Dispersal of the Phillipps Library, Phillipps Studies No. 5* (Cambridge, 1960), pp. 12–13. Before Phillipps moved to Thirlestaine House in 1863 the collection was in Middle Hill at Broadway.

31 In 1899, for example, art historian Paul Durrieu wrote about the Phillipps's manuscripts, regarding the Morgan Picture Bible as the pearl of the collection. See P. Durrieu, "Les manuscrits à peintures de la bibliothèque de Sir Thomas Phillipps à Cheltenham," *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 50 (1889), p. 386.

32 Robert Curzon had already attempted to purchase the manuscript from Phillipps in 1869, but Phillipps refused to sell it. Cockerell came to Cheltenham with Henry Yates Thompson in 1904, and again with Charles William Dyson Perrins in 1908, but both collectors failed to acquire the manuscript. In June 1915, Thompson wrote to Cockerell that he

again wanted to visit Fenwick. In November of the following year, though the war was not over, Belle da Costa Greene went to England and visited Fenwick. Thompson had already written to Fenwick on November 8 to ask if he could bring her over on the twenty-first.

33 For a fuller account of Greene's role in the purchase of the manuscript and its important role in the history of the Morgan Library see Voelkle's "Provenance and Place: The Morgan Picture Bible," which first appeared in *Between the Picture and the Word*, pp. 12–23, and his essay in *La biblia de los cruzados siglo XIII* (Valencia: Scriptorium, S.L., 2013), pp. 7–26 (Spanish), 297–315 (English).

34 Little has been added to his comprehensive account, to which I am greatly indebted.

35 Since the Roxburghe Club facsimile had been issued for a group of some thirty-eight bibliophiles, it is not generally available. Among the members were Sydney Cockerell, M. R. James, Charles Dyson Perrins, and Henry Yates Thompson. Cockerell's account of the history of the manuscript was, however, reprinted in Cockerell, *Old Testament Miniatures*, pp. 5–17.

MORGAN PICTURE BIBLE

PARIS, CA. 1250
THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM, NEW YORK, MS M.638, FOL. 3R,
PURCHASED BY J. P. MORGAN, JR., 1916





TOP LEFT: **Drunkenness of Noah¹**

Noah is shown twice, harvesting grapes and asleep because of his drunken state. His son Ham mocks him while another son covers his own eyes and his father's nakedness.²

LATIN: Here it is depicted how Noah planted a vineyard and, drunken with wine and naked, was mocked by one of his sons, and virtuously covered by the other two. (Genesis 9:20–23)

PERSIAN: After Noah left the ark, he planted a vineyard from which a cluster of grapes grew. He squeezed it, drank the juice, and got drunk. Noah had three sons, one of them came to him, saw his father drunk and naked and mocked him. And he called his brothers to come to see his father's state. When they saw him, turned away their eyes and covered his shame.

JUDEO-PERSIAN: This is the place where Noah, having drunk wine, fainted. His sons came to cover him.

¹ The Latin, Persian, and Judeo-Persian translations by Manuel Vicente Febrer Romaguera, Saeid Houshang, and Tamar Eilam Gindin, respectively, are from *La biblia de los cruzados siglo XIII* (Valencia: Scriptorium, S. L., 2013), p. 395.

² The Qur'an devotes a surah to Noah [LXXI] and the flood, stressing that Noah's good intentions were not heeded. His drunkenness is not mentioned, for wine is prohibited [surah 11:219].



TOP RIGHT: **Building the Tower of Babel**

Many medieval construction techniques are depicted, including a movable crane used to hoist stones. Above, God and two angels watch the men at work.

LATIN: Here it is depicted how the tower of Babylon was erected and God, watching over human arrogance from the highest, mixed up their languages in such a way they could not understand each other while they were building it, so that the work which had been begun could thus not be completed. (Genesis 11:7–9)

PERSIAN: A group of people agreed to build a high tower to be safe in case it rained so much again. God, the Exalted, despite their request, arranged things in such a way that if a master builder asked for water, he was brought soil. This happened because they had not a common tongue.

JUDEO-PERSIAN: The story of building a castle in the days of Nimrod.



BOTTOM LEFT: Abraham About to Sacrifice Isaac

Abraham, on God's orders, was to sacrifice Isaac, his only son, when an angel stays his sword, pointing to a ram whose horns were entangled in a thicket. Isaac is shown twice, carrying the wood needed for the sacrifice.³

LATIN: Here it is depicted how Abraham, submitted with the utmost obedience to God, went to sacrifice his one and only son and, having already raised his sword

to hurt him, he was held back by an angel and, unexpectedly, a ram appeared to him so that he destined it for sacrifice. (Genesis 22:1–13)

PERSIAN: This is the scene of His Excellence Abraham who was ordered to offer Isaac in sacrifice, and to fulfill God's command, he needed a sharp sword. God, the Omnipotent, the Exalted, told him to halt his hand that . . . arrives.

JUDEO-PERSIAN: This is the place of the binding of Isaac.

³ The Qur'an mentions Abraham in many surahs, as he is a model [surah XVI:120–23]: "follow the ways of Abraham, the True in faith, he joined not gods with God." According to the Qur'an, the trial of Abraham

was demanded by both Abraham and his son [surah XXXVII:99–111], and according to Arabic tradition he built the Ka'ba.



BOTTOM RIGHT: Four Victorious Kings Capture Lot, His Wife, and Children

The story reverts to an earlier episode relating to Abraham's nephew, Lot. During a war between four kings (Chedorlaomer, king of the Elamites, Thadal, king of nations, Amraphel, king of Sennaar, and Arioch, king of Pontus) on one side and five kings on the other (the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Adama, Seboim, and Bala, which is Segor), the four kings captured Lot and his family, who dwelt in Sodom. The victorious

soldiers, on horseback, lead the vanquished soldiers away, along with Lot's wife and children.⁴

LATIN: Here it is depicted how the army of the king of the Elamites and three other kings, after having defeated the king of Gomorrah, lead him captive together with four other kings, among whom Lot found himself, Abraham's nephew. (Genesis 14:1–13)

PERSIAN: Four kings stormed the city with their armies, captured the people and seized HIS Excellence Abraham's great grandson.

JUDEO-PERSIAN: The story of the four kings going over the city of Sodom, capturing and attacking Lot and the others. (Crossed out: Abraham went to meet them on the way and took back the property and captives.) —WV

⁴ The Qur'an mentions Lot in many surahs. He was Abraham's righteous nephew; his warnings to the people were ignored, but he was saved from the town that practiced abominations [surah XXI:74–75].

PART 3

A Contemporary
Pilgrimage across the
Mediterranean

Shared Sacred Sites at The James Gallery

On behalf of The Center for the Humanities and The James Gallery, I am pleased to have welcomed *Shared Sacred Sites* to The Graduate Center of The City University of New York. Recently installed in the lobby of The Graduate Center are nineteenth-century casts of the sculptures from the Parthenon, which are on loan from CUNY's City College of New York. The Parthenon's vicissitudes over the past two millennia—since its pantheistic origin tell a tale of conquest and transformation—first into a church, then a mosque—one of serial occupation by competing monotheistic traditions. The *Shared Sacred Sites* exhibition looked at a different and much less familiar story, one where beliefs are held in parallel and practices run coincidentally alongside one another.

Curated by professors Karen Barkey of the University of California, Berkeley, and Dionigi Albera and Manoël Pénicaud of the Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Aix-en-Provence, this exhibition drew on many years of anthropological fieldwork and examined sites that are shared among three of the world's most populous monotheistic faiths—Christianity, Judaism, and Islam—through artworks, images, objects, and words. It served to remind us of the importance of religion in the contemporary world, and how it is part of everyday shared public life for so many. By focusing on specific places, whether a synagogue, a Greek orthodox monastery, or a particular mosque, our attention was drawn toward quotidian behavior at the local level. The exhibition brought us into these real spaces where religion is lived and experienced, and by attending to the particular it revealed something very different and much less expected—that believers can and do get along, share, accommodate, and respect difference at the uniquely intimate level of the site of worship.

The iteration of *Shared Sacred Sites* on display at The Graduate Center was organized in the form of a tour of the major sacred shrines around the Mediterranean dedicated to prophets and patriarchs, as well as Mary and other saints, who are recognized by all three religions. A section on shared genealogies provided an introduction to the sites that embody shared memories—particularly those related to the prophets Abraham and Elijah—which have invariably become sites of conflict between religious authorities. The holy city of Hebron, known as the burial place of Abraham, the father of the three religions, is now physically subdivided between religions in the West Bank. While Mount Carmel, the site of a battle led by the prophet Elijah in present-day

northern Israel, sees the peaceful coexistence of believers from all three faiths.

For both Christians and Muslims, Mary has been the object of devotion as the Mother of God for the former and mother of the prophet Jesus for the latter. Muslims have often been known to pray at Christian sites, including the Nativity in Bethlehem, the location of Christ's birth, which Mohammad visited on his way to Jerusalem. Mary's garden in Egypt is another popular site—known as the place where the holy family experienced a miracle during the flight to Egypt. Today it is an open-air museum. Muslims and Christians also both worship at the underground church located at Gethsemani, situated near the supposed place of the assumption of Mary.

The exhibition next addressed the honoring of saints, which despite Jewish and Islamic prohibition of such practices is nonetheless shared between many denominations of each religion. Sites devoted to saints can be found throughout the Mediterranean region, including the Ghriba Synagogue in Djerba, Tunisia, which was built in honor of an unknown woman who died there in a fire, and the Greek orthodox monastery of Saint George on the island of Büyükada, Turkey, where thousands of Christians and Muslims travel to for the annual saint's feast day on April 23.

The final section of the exhibition was devoted to those who act as intermediaries between these faiths, such as healers, shamans, pilgrims, poets, and scholars, who serve as both observers and as cultural facilitators. Video portraits and interviews with these figures punctuated the exhibition, providing a key insight into the contemporary work of a rabbi, priest, spiritual guide, and a church in New York City.

The exhibition contained two newly commissioned artworks—*Wish Tree* (2018), an interactive sculptural work by Anna Marie Rockwell and *The Annunciation* (2017), a series of monotypes by Lino Mannocci—and we are indebted to both artists for their assistance with realizing these pieces.

I would like to express my thanks to Professors Barkey, Albera, and Pénicaud for bringing their vision to the Graduate Center, and to Bill Kelly of The New York Public Library and William M. Voelke of The Morgan Library & Museum for their collaboration. It was a delight to take part in this coming together of such outstanding neighbor organizations. Katherine Carl, curator of The James Gallery, and

Suzana Greene, *Shared Sacred Sites* project coordinator, were indispensable to the realization of this exhibition. And our gratitude to Sampson Starkweather in The Center for the Humanities for marketing and publicity assistance.

The City University of New York constitutes a crossroads at which people of many faiths and none can come together in the shared pursuit of knowledge, and the unique postgraduate mission of The Graduate Center invites all who enter to experience the intoxication of delving deeper. The public work that we do through The Graduate Center and through The James Gallery looks to share this goal with a diverse and inclusive wider public, and I am delighted to have had the opportunity to host this exhibition and invite you once more to join us in study.

Keith Wilson
Professor of Sculpture
Director, The Center for the Humanities



Manoël Pénicaud,
*Minaret of the David Tomb
and Tower Bell of the
Dormition Church of Mary,
Old Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
2015 (detail)*

Shared Sacred Sites in the Modern Holy Land

Nimrod Luz and Nurit Stadler

Contextualizing the Modern Holy Land

The sacred iconic map of the three Abrahamic religions of the Holy Land nowadays is a product of three main transformations: the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, which had controlled the region for four hundred years (1517–1917); the role of the British Empire within the Holy Land as determined by the League of Nations and known as the British Mandate for Palestine (1920–48); and the following decolonization process of the region and rise of nation-states, mostly Arab and Muslim but also the Jewish State of Israel. These three periods left their mark on the perception of sacred places and their effect on the landscape.

Sharing the Sacred during the Ottoman Period

A well-founded legal system existed during the period of Ottoman rule to segregate and categorize the empire's colonial subjects into racial, ethno-religious, and tribal groupings. This system excluded the colonial populace from the spoils of power and of equal membership in the political community. Yet, a more flexible and tolerated view was enacted with regard to religion.¹ Although the Ottoman Empire was more inclined to promote an Islamic hegemonic position at sacred shared spaces, it maintained a precarious balance that allowed for all denominations and forms of veneration to sustain a delicate coexistence, and in some cases share sacred sites in the Holy Land. This delicate equilibrium, however, changed once nationalistic sentiments, which had been sweeping the world since the eighteenth century, reached the region during the late nineteenth century and altered the perception of territory and belonging in the Middle East. These developments would contribute to a dramatic transformation in the interfaith dialogue among the different groups in the Holy Land. Former interfaith dialogues, precarious as they were, growingly were replaced with adversarial attitudes, confrontations, and the politicization of the sacred.

The British Mandate for Palestine: 1920–48

Against the rise of nationalism among the Jews and Muslims of the Holy Land and the hostility that sprung where once mutual tolerance existed, the British Mandate attempted to uphold historical agreements regarding religious and sacred sites to be known later as the status quo of the region.² Conflictual tendencies were now reinforced. Not coincidentally, the first armed and violent conflicts between Jews and Arabs in the Holy Land were sparked by confrontations about control



Manoël Pénicaud,
Mosque of Omar on the
Dormition Day of
Mary, Old Jerusalem,
Jerusalem, 2015

¹ Karen Barkey, "Religious Pluralism: Shared Sacred Sites and the Ottoman Empire," in *Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites: Religion, Politics, and Conflict Resolution*, edited by Elazar Barkan and Karen Barkey (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014),

pp. 33–35. United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, Working Paper on the Holy Places, April 8, 1949, <http://ecf.org.il/issues/issue/1420>.

² Working Paper on the Holy Places, p. 7.

in the vicinity of the Temple Mount, known to Muslims as the Haram al-Sharif, in Jerusalem in 1928–29.³ Escalation and growing interreligious animosity were only exacerbated following the 1947–48 civil war in Palestine, the creation of Israel as the Jewish state, and the war that ensued between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

State Building and Nationalism: 1948 to the Present

The geopolitical changes that trailed the 1948 Arab-Israeli War fragmented the Holy Land into several territories and directly affected developments in formerly shared sites and the sacred realm at large. As local communities (hitherto defined along religious lines) started to cultivate national identities, working ceaselessly toward the ultimate goal of an independent state, interfaith tolerance lessened considerably as did their capacity to share the same territory and religious landmarks. Affiliations and identities became politicized tools, and religious sites turned into particularistic spaces rather than holistic ones. Each country, group, or clan promoted sacred places as part of their native mythology and heritage. Sacred shrines were soon to become the heart of the conflicts in the Holy Land. Particularly, the lingering conflict between the Arab-Palestinian and Jewish-Zionist movements transformed previously shared sites into contested and at times literal battlefields.

Jerusalem As an Archetype

In the Holy Land, Jerusalem is considered the most important and sacred to the three Abrahamic religions. Since the latter days of the Ottoman Empire, it has been linked to the expression of religious sentiments and space-based holiness. After the creation of the Jewish state, Jerusalem, which was always a place of rivalry, contestation, and religious polemics, also became a political conflictual center with growing disputes over territories and rise of national claim. Accordingly, the current struggle over sacred places must be understood not only via the historical-contextual lens but also within the current context of conflict between Jews and Muslims, Israelis and Palestinians.

Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif

One of the most central examples is the struggle over the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem. The Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif has been the epicenter of conflict since the 1920s, and has been viewed by both Jews and Muslims as an arena through which to establish a national identity and engage the adversary. Its political importance trumps, time and again, any concessions or acknowledgment of a mutual heritage based on its religious status. Thus, even though the 1949 armistice required Jordan to allow access to the holy basin for all religious communities, the agreement was not honored. Jewish pilgrims were banned from Jerusalem's holy sites for the duration of the Jordanian rule.

³ Hillel Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1929* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2015).

Since 1967 Israel has controlled Eastern and Western Jerusalem, including Temple Mount and its environs. Even though the state preserved and acknowledged Islamic administration of the Haram, Israel did not hesitate to exploit its power and change the regulations surrounding the platform of the Wailing Wall to ensure better access for Jewish pilgrims.⁴ This situation restricts and limits Palestinian access to the compound. The holiness of the al-Aqsa Mosque has become a rallying cry for the Palestinian Authority as well as the Islamic Movement in Israel to mobilize Palestinians to stand against Israeli occupation.⁵ The importance assigned to the site and the ongoing politicization of it are the main reasons behind the clashes and violence. Israelis and Palestinians currently perceive the holy basin of Jerusalem in general, and the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount in particular, as indivisible. The site is rendered as irreplaceable, which directly affects the capacity of the people to share it, to accommodate, or welcome the other.⁶

Tomb of David/Maqam Nabi Da'ud on Mount Zion

The three Abrahamic religions have long revered the Tomb of David/Maqam Nabi Da'ud on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. While in the Jewish and Muslim tradition the tomb is considered to be located on the ground floor of the compound, Christians developed a somewhat different take on this holy site over time. Christian pilgrims believe that the place of the Cenacle and the Pentecost is located on a level above its Jewish and Muslim counterpart. The three religions share the belief that David was buried at Mount Zion. This has led time and again to confrontations regarding ownership of the site despite a modus vivendi that has enabled all devotees to practice their faith therein. Since the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, Mount Zion has been governed by the state of Israel, which has paved the way for dramatic changes in the control and nature of pilgrimage to the site. It has since undergone a process of Judaization and Israelization, affecting Christian and Muslim religious activities within it.⁷ Concurrent with the surge of pilgrimage and veneration in contemporary Israel, the place has become one of the most sought-after and popular sacred sites for Jews.⁸ In recent years, due to its sensitive location within the holy basin of Jerusalem and to threats from extremist Jewish groups, which are endeavoring to erase the Muslim and Christian heritage from the site, the site is now entering a new chapter that strays from its history of coexistence. Jewish symbols are reinforced, and Jewish agents are imposing gender and religious segregation at the site.

Manoël Pénicaud, Tomb of the Prophet Samuel, Nabi Samwil, West Bank, 2014



4 Hillel Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1929* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2015).

5 Roger Friedland and Richard Hecht, *To Rule Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

6 Nimrod Luz, *Al-Haram al-Sharif in the Arab-Palestinian Public Discourse in Israel: Identity, Collective Memory and Social Construction* (Jerusalem: Achva Press; Jerusalem: Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies, 2004).

7 Doron Bar, "Between Muslim and Jewish Sanctity: Judaizing Muslim Holy Places in the State of Israel, 1948–1967," *Journal of Historical Geography* 59 (2018), pp. 68–76.

8 Nimrod Luz and Noga Collins-Kreiner, "Exploring Jewish Pilgrimage in Israel," in *International Perspectives on Pilgrimage Studies Itineraries, Gaps and Obstacles*, edited by Dionigi Albera and John Eade (New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 142–43.



Manoël Pénicaud, Jewish Pilgrims at the Tomb of Rachel, Bethlehem, 2015



Andrea Merli, *Check-Point at the Entrance of the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron/ Al-Khalil: Far away, yet so close*, Hebron, West Bank, 2012

Tomb of Samuel/Maqam Nabi Samwil

The Tomb of Samuel/Maqam Nabi Samwil was originally built in 1141 as a crusader castle and monastery, which later was transformed into a mosque adorned with a conspicuous minaret. For centuries the three Abrahamic religions maintained a precarious coexistence in this unique place. During the British Mandate, Jews and Muslims were free to perform religious rituals, even under the authority of the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf.⁹ From 1948 to 1967 Jews were unable to arrive at the site as it was under the direct rule of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Following the 1967 war and the Israeli occupation, after nineteen years of Jordanian control, Jewish activities were restored in the place. In 1998 an area of 3,500 dunums surrounding the site was declared a national park, which complicated matters of ownership and access.¹⁰ Although the site is highly contested between Jewish and Muslim groups, who constantly try to mitigate or even terminate rights of ownership and rituals belonging to each other, Muslims currently pray within the mosque amidst a growing Jewish presence.¹¹ The place is now shared by Jews and Muslims, both of which commemorate their own “original” cenotaph of the prophet Samuel.

⁹ Yitzhak Reiter, “Contest and Cohabitation in Shared Holy Places? The Cave of Patriarch and Samuel’s Tomb,” in *Holy Places in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Confrontation and Co-Existence*, edited by Marshall J. Berger, Yitzhak Reiter, and Leonard Hammer (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 169–70.

¹⁰ Eran Torbiner, “Nabi Samwil 1099–2099,” produced by Eran Torbiner and Karin Lindner, video, 28:57, December 10, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Np6SAytxPDw>.

¹¹ Reiter, “Contest or Cohabitation in Shared Holy Places?” pp. 169–70.

Tomb of Rachel/Qubat Rahil

Sacred among the Christian, Jewish, and Islamic traditions, the convoluted history of Rachel’s Tomb extends at least 1,700 years.¹² During the nineteenth century conflicts over ownership of the site and freedom of pilgrimage were checked and contained by the Ottomans. Throughout the British Mandate, Christians, Jews, and Muslims were able to visit and venerate until clashes preceding the 1948 war began. From 1948 to 1967 while the site was under Jordanian rule, mostly local Muslim women visited it. After the 1967 war, Israel absorbed control of the tomb and its environs and Rachel’s attributes as the mother of the Jewish nation were enhanced. The Tomb of Rachel has since become one of the most visited sacred sites among Jewish worshipers, most of whom are women asking the matriarch to help with problems related to fertility.¹³ Expected to return control over the site to the Palestinians in compliance with the 1993 Oslo Accords, Israel instead annexed the tomb and dramatically changed the surrounding landscape. In an effort to protect pilgrims traveling to the site, located between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, a new construction plan was implemented in 1995, which turned the former modest dome-shaped shrine into a fortified stronghold. In 2002 another wall was added as part of the Separation Wall constructed by Israel in response to ongoing Palestinian suicidal bombers. The new architecture and surrounding wall gave the shrine an atmosphere of an army bunker, and further encroached on Muslims’ accessibility to the site. Despite the geopolitical changes in and around the tomb, Palestinian-Muslims have declared the age-old Qubat Rahil (the Dome of Rachel) as the Bilal Bin Rabah Mosque in honor of the Prophet Muhammad’s personal companion and former slave, who is also considered Islam’s first *mu’adhdhin*; the person who summons the Muslims to prayers from the mosque’s minaret five times a day.¹⁴

Cave of Machpelah/al-Haram al-Ibrahimi

The Cave of Machpelah/al-Haram al-Ibrahimi has been on the itinerary of Holy Land pilgrims as early as the fourth century. Whereas its Hebrew name reminds us of the whole Abrahamic family, matriarchs and patriarchs alike, its Arab title focuses on Ibrahim, who is considered the first monotheistic believer and is greatly venerated in Islam. In 1967 Jews were allowed entrance to perform their rituals at the site for the first time since 1187. By a decree of then-Israeli defense minister, Moshe Dayan, a system that allowed for a spatial and a chronological division was implemented in order to sustain Jewish and Muslim devotion at the site. In parallel with the armed conflict between various Israeli and Palestinian armed groups, the place has since been subjected to numerous violent clashes. The most significant and horrific one is known also as the Massacre of the Cave of the Patriarchs. On

¹² Nurit Stadler, “Appropriating Jerusalem through Sacred Places: Disputed Land and Female Rituals at the Tombs of Mary and Rachel,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 88, no. 3 (Summer 2015), pp. 725–58.

¹³ Susan Starr Sered, “Rachel’s Tomb: The Development of a Cult,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1995), pp. 103–48.

¹⁴ Nimrod Luz and Nurit Stadler, “Two Venerated Mothers Separated by a Fence: Iconic Spaces, Territoriality, and Borders in Israel-Palestine,” *Religion and Society* 6 (2015), pp. 131–32. In 2010 the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization declared that Rachel’s Tomb is an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territories and that any unilateral action by the Israeli authorities should be viewed as a violation of international law.



Guy Raivitz, *Both Men and Women Pray inside Elijah's Cave, Haifa, Israel, 2017*

February 25, 1994, an American-born, Jewish-Israeli settler from Hebron entered the site during the month of Ramadan and opened fire on Palestinian Muslims, who had gathered to pray inside the mosque. Twenty-nine people were killed during the attack and no less than one hundred and twenty-five people were injured.¹⁵ A complete separation between Jews and Muslims is now strictly imposed at the recommendation of the Israeli government. Pilgrims of the two religions are restricted to their own areas within the site, except on ten special days a year unique to each religion on which its members may enter all parts of the building. Pilgrims of other religions and tourists may enter both areas throughout the year. This dystopic coexistence allows both groups to concomitantly practice their respective faiths with a complete disregard of their counterparts.

Elijah's Cave/Maqam Nabi Khidr on Mount Carmel

The cave on the northern slopes of Mount Carmel has been a shared pilgrimage site for Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Druze for centuries. In the seventeenth century local Muslims drove away the monks of the Carmelite Order, who had tried to establish their own rituals in the cave of Elijah/Maqam Nabi Khidr. But by and large religious practice was preserved for all. As in other shared places this highly important pilgrimage site experienced a process of Judaization that started in 1948 as part of a national initiative carried out by the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs. This initiative effectively turned the cave into a predominantly Jewish site even though pilgrims of other religions are not banned from entry. A sign posted following renovations in the 1950s and 1960s by the Israeli authorities incorrectly and curtly sums up these changes: "This is an ancient place of prostration for the Jews of Haifa."¹⁶ Notwithstanding the above, the site is still shared and revered, welcoming pilgrims of all denominations.

The modern era brought forth dramatic changes in the capacity of the different religious groups present in the Holy Land to accommodate, tolerate, and share the sacred with one another. With the emergence of the concept and configuration of nation-states in the Middle East, the perception of sacred places has changed. What was in the past an imaginative, religious, holy map—full of iconic spaces, shared mutual acceptance of different faith groups, or a tolerated perspective—has changed with the national revolution, bringing more conflict and dispute over the sacred. This state of affairs has turned many sites that used to be shared into bastions of nationalism and violence.

Following spread:
Manoël Pénicaud, *Icon of "Our Lady Who Brings Down the Walls" on the Wall of Separation, Bethlehem, 2014*

¹⁵ Reiter, "Contest or Cohabitation in Shared Holy Places?" pp. 171–73.

¹⁶ Doron Bar, "Wars and Sacred Space: The Influence of the 1948 War on Sacred Space in the State of Israel," in *Holy Places in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, pp. 76–77.



RIDE INTO
DEEP

Lino Mannocci

THE ANNUNCIATION

LONDON, 2017
SERIES OF TEN MONOTYPES
COURTESY THE ARTIST

Fascinated with the Annunciation for a very long time, the artist Lino Mannocci painted beautiful oil-on-canvas works on this topic in the 1990s. In this series commissioned for the exhibition, he created monotypes on parchment. Most of these repurposed sheets of paper are old documents from the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, dealing with financial transactions and nearly always legitimizing their validity through the usage of religious terms and references to God. Layers of religious reflection are embedded into this beautiful and evocative work.

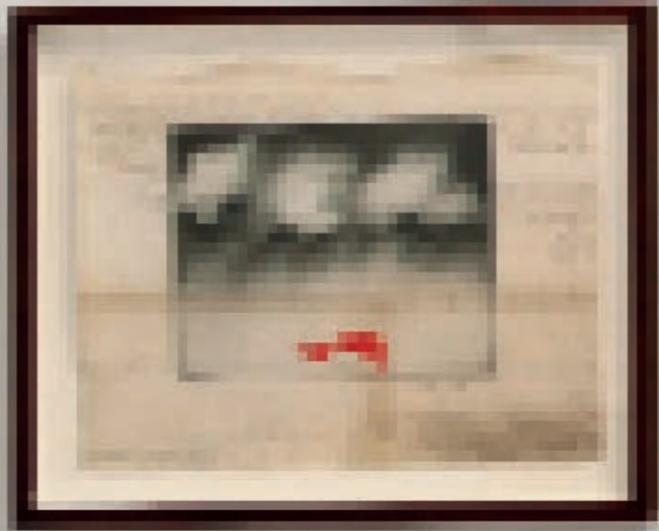
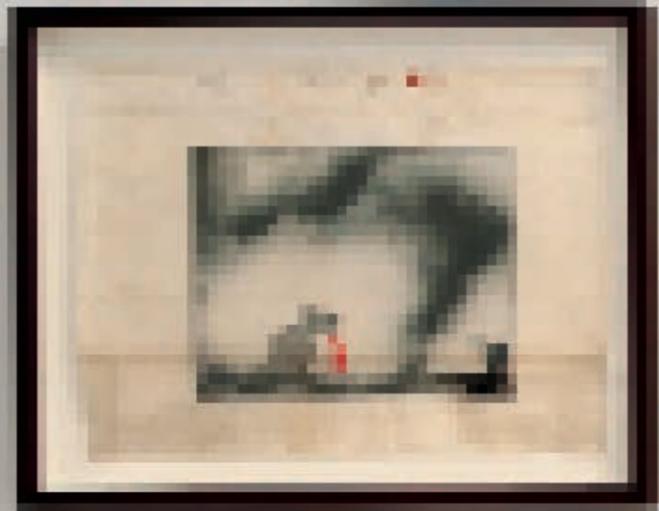
On the Annunciation, Mannocci has stated:

“I find the story of the Annunciation, the mystery of the incarnation, the possibility of embedding matter with aesthetic or spiritual value, an irresistible metaphor for the activity of painting.

“Working on parchment with monotypes, it seems to me, helps to evoke the complex relationship between body and soul, matter and spirit that exists in all monotheistic religions.

“The analogy that painting, like the young Mary, can become the meeting point between the material and the spiritual, that a stretched skin and its configuration might conjure up a hypostatic union, is a seductive notion that feeds my imagination. Art, like Mary, can be the rainbow that links the earthly and the divine.” —KB





Ayşe Özalp

THE ANNUNCIATION (MUSLIM MINIATURE)

ISTANBUL, 2017
INK ON PARCHMENT
PRIVATE COLLECTION, ISTANBUL

Following the painting tradition of the school of Isfahan in Iran, the Turkish artist Ayşe Özalp reproduced an ancient Persian miniature on an old Ottoman sheet of paper.

The miniature depicts a serene landscape, full of flowers with some birds flying in the clear sky and nesting in the branches of a tree that occupies the center of the scene. On the left side of the image, Mary is seated near a water source in the shade of a tree. On the right, an angel is standing in front of Mary, who is tilting her head in a manner of surprise and modesty.

This representation follows the narrative of the Annunciation as it is described in the Qur'an (surah 19:16–21), where it is told that when Mary withdrew from her people to a place to the East, God sent His angel to her in the form of a perfect man, who announced to the young woman that she would conceive Jesus through divine intervention.

—DA



Anna Marie Rockwell

WISH TREE

NEW YORK, 2018
VARIOUS MATERIALS
PRIVATE COLLECTION

Trees have frequently been appropriated for wish making in various cultures, their association with good fortune and health being manifested through specific actions. In places such as the Scottish Highlands, wish makers have inserted coins into the tree's bark and, in the Congo, bottles have been hung from tree branches, a practice that was brought over to the Americas by slaves, who hung bottles upside down from trees as talismans to ward off evil spirits. Colorful ribbons inscribed with personal wishes have been tied to trees in Japan,

a ritual practice common in many Eastern cultures. This is particularly frequent across the Mediterranean area.

Rockwell presents merely the stump of a tree, which becomes the base for an upward-facing mirror. When examining the stump, one sees oneself gazing back. The *Wish Tree* becomes a "shared sacred site" for each individual's confrontation with his or her own longings, as well as a place to reflect on the nature of wish making across cultures and faiths.

High above the stump and mirror hang various branches with adornments

representing vehicles for wish making, including an oil lamp, beeswax candles, bottles to collect evil spirits, folded paper cranes, love locks, eye lashes, a wish bone, a dried dandelion, a meteorite, and various coins. We are invited to enter into this space of infinite possibility between the stump and the branches up above to ask the questions: On what does one wish? For what does one wish? —MP







Manoël Pénicaud,
The Ghriba Synagogue,
Djerba, Tunisia, 2014

The Ghriba Synagogue in Djerba: A Shared Holy Place for Jews and Muslims

Dionigi Albera and Manoël Pénicaud

In North Africa the long-term coexistence between Jews and Muslims has given rise to numerous crossovers and interactions between the two faiths. It was not uncommon for people of one religion to visit the shrine of another religion to obtain *baraka* (“divine grace” or “blessing” in Arabic).¹ The act of sharing holy places (such as the tombs of rabbis or Muslim saints) was even an important phenomenon in the Maghreb.² But after the Sephardic Jews left North Africa in the second half of the twentieth century, incidences of this cross-fertilization died out with the exception of a few places, mainly in Morocco and Tunisia. Despite the large-scale immigration of Jews, a local Jewish community of hundreds of people still inhabits the island of Djerba

¹ The Arabic term *ziyāra* is used by both Jews and Muslims to designate the visiting of the tomb of a saint. In Islam, this type of worship is different from the canonical pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj).

² Ben Ami, 1990; Voinot, 1948; and Zafrani, 1990.

in southeastern Tunisia, and has maintained an important pilgrimage that draws Tunisian Jews from Europe, Israel, and North America.

Every year, for the celebration of the feast of Lag Ba'Omer,³ many Tunisian Jews converge to the synagogue called "Ghriba" ("mysterious," "lone," stranger" in Arabic), a name referring to an unknown female saint. Famous in the past, this sanctuary continues to be a place of spiritual magnetism and is also attended by Muslim women.

Although the Ghriba *hiloula* (feast day in honor of a Tzaddik, a righteous one in Hebrew) is a well-known phenomenon in Tunisia,⁴ the synagogue has been less studied in terms of sharing and interfaith heterogeneity.⁵ This essay aims to understand interfaith practices by examining the sanctuary's open qualities, both as a local place of worship dedicated to the regular service of the community, and as a powerful holy place of pilgrimage.

Historical Perspectives and Narratives

Two different narratives describe the foundation of the Ghriba. According to the first, some Jewish priests (*cohenim* in Hebrew) who were fleeing Palestine after the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem by the army of Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BCE, landed on this island, which seemed "strange" and "mysterious" to them. In that case, the meaning of *ghriba* would correspond to the island itself. After their arrival, the priests built a synagogue with stones from a door of the destroyed temple, which they had carried to Djerba with them. This version was first published in 1849, and then republished by the Orientalist Nahum Slouschz at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁶ The significant aspect of this narrative is the link to the Temple of Jerusalem. The Jerusalem stones give a specific value to the place, which becomes holier than any other simple synagogue. Some years before Slouschz, another author mentioned that local Jews informed him that the Tables of the Law were preserved inside the Ghriba synagogue.⁷ These legends aim to legitimize the holiness of the place, and still bear significance today. Some Jewish people are convinced that the famous stones were in fact the Tables of the Law, making the Ghriba an alternative of the lost Temple.

The second narrative, which was also published by Slouschz, explains that the Ghriba was a mysterious young woman who came to live alone in a hut on the island, not far from the Hara Sghira village inhabited by Jews. People maintained a prudent distance from the woman. One night her hut caught fire. Thinking she was practicing magic, nobody came to her rescue. The day after, the villagers

3 The Lag Ba'Omer commemorates the anniversary of the death of the rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai. This feast occurs on the 33rd day of the counting of the Omer, such as the 18th day of the Hebrew month of Iyar.

4 Lucette Valensi and Abraham L. Udovitch, *Juifs en Terre d'islam: Les communautés de Djerba* (Montreux: Éditions des archives contemporaines, 1984).

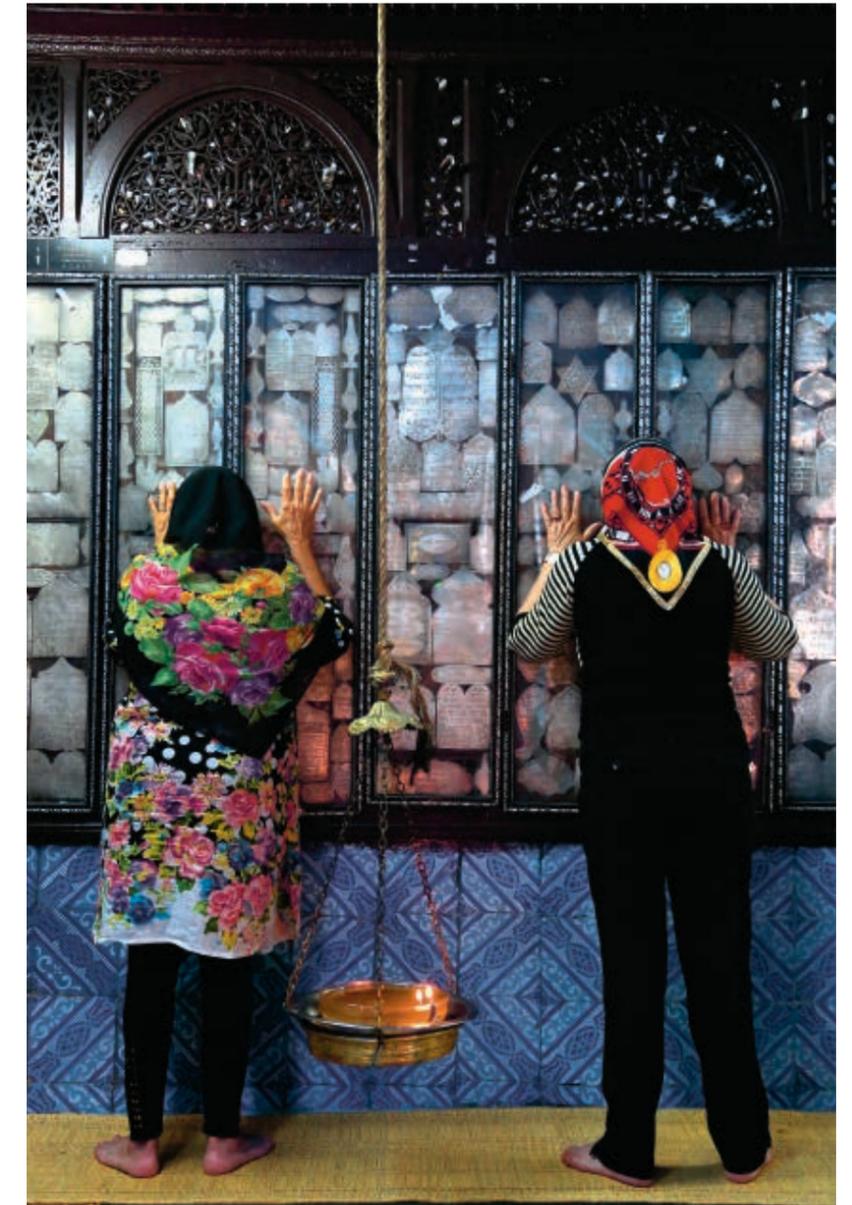
5 See Carpenter-Latiri Dora, "The Ghriba in the Island of Jerba (or Djerba) or the Re-Invention of a Shared Shrine as a Metonym for a Multicultural Tunisia," in *Sharing the Sacra: The Politics and Pragmatics of Intercommunal Relations around Holy Places*, ed.

Glenn Bowman (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012); Dionigi Albera and Manoël Pénicaud, "La synagogue de la Ghriba à Djerba: Réflexions sur l'inclusivité d'un sanctuaire partagé en Tunisie," *Cahiers d'Outre-Mer* (2017), p. 175.

6 An interesting aspect is that Nahum Slouschz listed several synagogues called Ghriba in Algeria, Libya, and Tunisia. See Nahum Slouschz, *Travels in North Africa* (Jewish publication society of America, 1909).

7 Vincent Amaury, *A travers le monde* (Paris: Hachette, 1896).

discovered her body lifeless but intact. They then understood that she was a holy person and decided to raise a sanctuary at this precise place. It was the synagogue, but the religious indeterminacy of the female saint can explain why Muslims also attend it. For many of them, she might be a Muslim, yet to others she was a Jew. In May 2014, a Jewish pilgrim now living in France but who grew up in Tunisia said: "The Ghriba means the 'loner' in Arabic and in Jewish [sic]. It is said that she is a young woman who was found on the beach. The Tunisian Muslims said that she was a daughter from their side, and the Jews here have said that she was a girl from their side. So, they built a synagogue where we enter as in a mosque, head covered and barefoot." By entering the



Manoël Pénicaud,
*Jewish and Muslim Women
Praying Side by Side
in the Ghriba Synagogue,
Djerba, Tunisia, 2014*

synagogue barefoot, this pilgrim describes an example of the site's openness toward Muslims. Yet this could also be interpreted as another reference to the Temple in Jerusalem where one had to enter barefoot.

Nowadays the narrative of the mysterious woman is known and shared by pilgrims of the two faiths. Even if the cult of the saint is not part of Hebraic and Islamic orthodoxies, it seems that many Jews and Muslims need the mediation of a holy figure to help them in their everyday life, because God is unknowable and untouchable to them. Rabbis or saints—even when they are related to another religion—can provide support to the worshiper and make prayers more efficient. In other words, efficacy is a key of the sharing of the same sacred spaces.

During the first part of the twentieth century, travelers described the Ghriba as an important center of pilgrimage. Slouschz presented it as a “Jewish Lourdes,” attracting many pilgrims from all over Tunisia as well as from Libya.⁸ As a matter of fact, this hiloula was an annual gathering of different North-African Sephardic communities. After the creation of the state of Israel and the consecutive conflicts with Arab countries in the second part of the twentieth century, there was a massive emigration of Jewish populations to the extent that a Jewish presence has almost completely disappeared from Algeria, Egypt, and Libya. In Tunisia, most of the Jewish population left in the 1950s and the 1960s, except in some cities and in Djerba. The influx of pilgrims has considerably dropped. Despite this context, the local community



Manoël Pénicaud, *Pilgrims in the Ghriba Synagogue, Djerba, Tunisia, 2014*

8 Slouschz, *Travels in North Africa*.

of Djerba has maintained the pilgrimage, and Tunisian Jews living abroad continue to travel every year to Djerba. With the political encouragement of the Tunisian state, the influx of pilgrims represents significant touristic and economic developments.

In 2002 an attack imputed to Al-Qaeda killed nineteen people at the entrance of the Ghriba. Consequentially, security forces have been assigned to the synagogue to protect access to the site, especially during the pilgrimage. The reaction to the 2002 attack concretely conveys the inclusiveness of the sanctuary, including Muslims. After the end of the Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali regime in 2011, a new period of instability began. Jews feared returning to in their beloved Tunisian country, which was agitated by the so-called Jasmine Revolution. During that time the pilgrimage remained local and confidential. After the adoption of a new constitution in 2014, international pilgrims came back to the Ghriba despite yearly rumors of terrorist attacks.

A Short Ethnography of the Pilgrimage

The hiloula at the Ghriba always takes place in May, depending on the Jewish calendar. International pilgrims typically stay in five-star hotels in the touristic area of the island, booked mostly through travel agencies. They come to the sanctuary by bus, escorted through numerous security forces. After an obligatory checkpoint (where an invitation or identification is requested), one can enter the sacred area. Security is much less visible inside the synagogue, contrasting starkly with the strict outside controls. Inside the sanctuary, Jewish people express their happiness and joy to reach the goal of their pilgrimage but also to find their family, friends, and fellow worshippers.

Beyond the gate of the sanctuary, a large room marks the synagogal space. This is where rabbis recite verses and prayers for visitors who make offerings. The sharing starts with distributions of biscuits, dried fruits, and fig alcohol (*bukha* in dialectal Arabic). There is no gender separation. A mixture of men and women talk, sing, and pray together in this space, where music is often present. Suddenly an old man sings in Arabic: “Where are you Pilgrims who enter the Ghriba? And today the Ghriba welcomes and blesses you! Sing you, Pilgrims!” At the back of the room, a Muslim employee draws water from a well that pilgrims ritually splash on their faces.

Rituality becomes more intense in the second room. Worshippers remove their shoes before entering this room, where people are more concentrated in their ritual performance. Under blue arches, long burners attract many people, mostly women, who light candles. This is the heart of the sanctuary, where requests and prayers are susceptible to be granted. The ritual density is more strongly displayed. Rabbis loudly recite blessings while people are silently praying in front of the wall, in the direction of Jerusalem, behind which the Torah rolls are kept (*eikhal*). Above this wall full of metallic ex-voto (Star of David, *khamisa* hand, etc.), hundreds of paper wishes have



Manoël Pénicaud, *Woman and Votive Eggs in the Crypt of the Ghriba Synagogue, Djerba, Tunisia, 2014*

been deposited anonymously and devoutly. It is not immediately perceptible that Muslims are discreetly performing their own rituals, sometimes mimicking Jewish practices. For example, a Jewish woman and a Muslim woman were both praying on the ex-voto wall in 2014. The latter was following the recommendation of the former, but nothing visually distinguished them. Another Muslim woman loudly claimed: “I am Tunisian, Muslim and I do the Ghriba and I make the pilgrimage. I did it once and it brought me a lot of happiness. I am like them. I consider that I am at home. There are no differences between us!” She was instantly commended and approved by Jewish persons that were present in this part of the prayer room.

Writing wishes on raw eggs is the most emblematic ritual at the Ghriba. Mostly women enter a sort of crypt where the body of the Ghriba would have been discovered. They deposit eggs there after having inscribed them with their most fervent desires. Muslim women come to perform this specific ritual. Inside the “tunnel,” a lady explains that she is depositing eggs “for my family, my children, for people . . . for people who do not have a baby, who are not married. Health, success, baby, marriage All that we have at the bottom of our heart, all that we wish to receive!” In fact, it shows that in spite of different religious affiliations, people of different faith share the same desires and expectations. While a Muslim woman enters the crypt, her Jewish husband explains: “I have lived here for fifteen years, in the Jewish quarter in Hara Kbir. I am married to a Muslim woman, we are not human beings different from each other, we must know each other better, so as not to have wars.” From an anthropological perspective, the Ghriba is an excellent laboratory to observe a common ritual practiced by Jews and Muslims. Characterized by a great spiritual power—due to the Ghriba figure—, this holy place offers free rein to individual devotions and ritual creativity.

Outside of the synagogue, another area represents the “profane” part of the Ghriba complex. It is an old caravanserai (locally called *ukala*), where pilgrims were once lodged. But nowadays, most of them stay in seaside resort hotels, far from the Jewish villages and the main city of Houmt Souk. This caravanserai space is articulated around a vast square courtyard decorated with many Tunisian flags. Festivities such as music, speeches, and dances (only men dance in this conservative Judaism milieu) take place there. Moreover, the economic dimension is a common characteristic of the pilgrimage phenomenon, but what is interesting about the Ghriba market is that Muslim merchants hold a few stalls. In a special kosher shop, one can buy eggs and candles for the rituals mentioned above. There are also several stalls offering kosher Tunisian food (grilled meat, Jewish couscous, *chakchouka*). Commensality becomes very strong at lunchtime. Later in the afternoon, an important sequence occurs: the auction of the *rimomim*, the ornaments of the Torah that are placed that day at the top of the Menara, which is a monumental candlestick about 1.6 meters high.

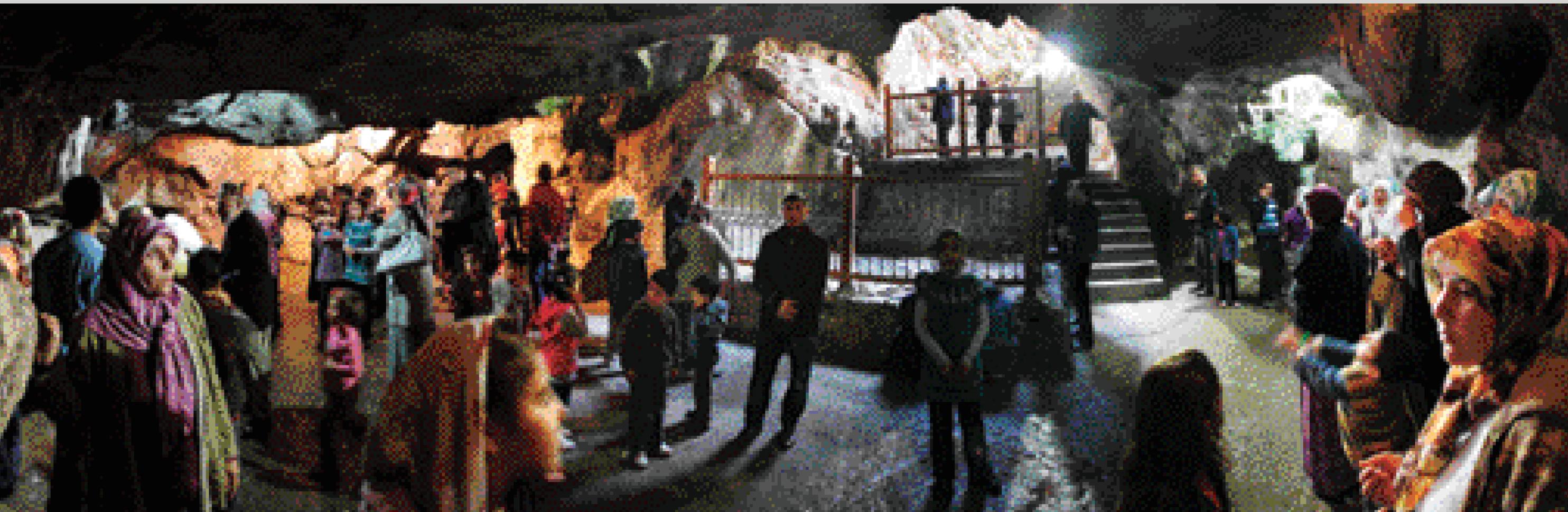
Throughout the day, it becomes a pole of attraction especially for women, who devoutly knit many votive scarves. In parallel, the solemn auction aims to raise the price of rimomim (up to several thousand dinars). It is an honor for the ones who symbolically acquire one of these ornaments through an offering that becomes a donation to the sanctuary. At the end of the day, the Menara is solemnly carried in procession outside of the Ghriba complex. In the past this procession traversed the village of Hara Sghira, but nowadays it ends at the bottom of the street for security reasons. Snipers are posted on the roof of the synagogue and a helicopter regularly flies over the sanctuary, while intelligence services film the procession and each participant. The procession, which was once an occasion of sharing and conviviality, is now overprotected.

Discourses of Coexistence and Nostalgia

Despite the security measures now present at Ghriba and the spiritual and cultural complexities of sharing the space, especially during the pilgrimage, participants continue to express discourses and representations of inclusiveness and coexistence toward religious otherness. For example, a former Tunisian Jew now living in France claims: “There is no calculation to be made: Muslims, Christians, Jews. . . . If there is a small problem, there is a desire of pilgrimage, one wants to escape, to make a break, or to grant wishes, the synagogue is open to everyone, and each, according to their needs can do what he wants. . . . Some Muslims I know believe in the Ghriba as much as we do, that’s the advantage!” Even if many of devotees hesitate to return to Tunisia for the pilgrimage, due to the threat of terrorist attacks, it is interesting to observe that—once in the sanctuary—they feel themselves as Tunisian and clearly declare nostalgia for their “lost country.” When sharing their souvenirs, two women declared: “There is a great fraternity between Arabs and Jews. We grew up with them, we played with them, we never had any problems, between families, we exchanged many things. We were like brothers and sisters! Muslims believe in the young woman, and in her miracles, they come to make their wishes and believe in the miracles of the Ghriba. Muslims come here to lay their ‘wishing’ eggs and they pray. It proves that we are connected!” The annual pilgrimage has a strong memorial and identity dimension, which has been promoted by the Tunisian state in the name of the mythical *convivencia* (“coexistence”). Indeed political representatives, such as ministers, call for the peaceful coexistence between people and religions, remembering the “golden age of Al Andalus.” In a way, the act of sharing is officially and profusely promoted, but it is on the contrary clearly limited due to the deployment of security measures.

Throughout history, many Mediterranean islands have been important contact zones between different civilizations. Institutional control in these more far-flung areas was often not as strict as on the continent. In a way isolation facilitated the development of exchanges between religions, overcoming dogmatic barriers. Demonstrations of interfaith convergence and shared practices were therefore particularly heightened in these remote locations. This is certainly the case of Djerba, where one of the rare Jewish communities in the Maghreb region has subsisted.

Traditionally the Lag Ba’Omer commemorates the anniversary of the death of the great rabbi Shimon Bar Yohaï (locally referred to as “Rabbi Shim’un”), whose tomb is actually located in Meron, Israel. But in Djerba, many people also came—and still come—for the reputed power of a feminine figure: the Ghriba. From this perspective, the success of the pilgrimage is linked to the question of the efficacy of both the “saint” and of the holy place, which thereby welcomes Muslims who temporarily cross the religious boundaries in order to receive a blessing or a miracle. These joint acts of piety arise from a common desire for good health, marriage, children, protection, and prosperity. Not only are the places shared, but so are the wishes and practices. In other words, people share an infra-religiosity (materialized in candles, amulets, talismans, votive offerings, incenses, etc.), which concretely becomes a kind of inter-religiosity that is broader than the dogmatic frameworks defined by religious institutions.



Manoël Pénicaud

MUSLIM PILGRIMS IN THE CAVE OF THE SEVEN SLEEPERS

TARSUS, TURKEY, 2010

PHOTOGRAPH

PRIVATE COLLECTION

The Seven Sleepers were young Christians who were persecuted by the Roman emperor Decius in the third century. According to tradition, they fled from Ephesus (in what is today western Turkey) and hid themselves in a cave, where they fell into a miraculous sleep for several centuries. They awoke in the fifth century, when the empire had become Christian. These holy sleepers are also known in Islam as the People of the Cave (*Ahl al-Kahf* in Arabic), according to the eighteenth surah called “The Cave.” Their miraculous reawakening is a metaphor for the resurrection of the body in both Christianity and Islam.

The narrative of the Seven Sleepers was widely disseminated. Numerous caves in the Mediterranean region are considered to be the sacred place where this miracle once occurred. In some cases, the legend has given rise to joint veneration by Christians and Muslims.

This image is part of *The Mediterranean of the Seven Sleepers* series. It offers a panoramic view of Muslim pilgrims in the holy cave of the Seven Sleepers located in Tarsus in southern Turkey. This series presents six other holy places—Sefrou in Morocco, Damascus in Syria, Chenini in Tunisia, and Afşin, Cappadocia, and Ephesus in Turkey. —MP



Thomas Allom, Balıklı Church in Istanbul, in *Constantinople and the Scenery of Seven Churches*, 1838. The New York Public Library (detail, see p. 163)

The Greek Orthodox Churches of Istanbul

Karen Barkey

Once the seat of the Ottoman Empire (1299–1922) and before that the capital known as Constantinople of the Byzantine Empire (330AD–1453), Istanbul has experienced a long and glorious history of cosmopolitanism due to the cultural expertise of its diverse populations. What transpired in Istanbul was replicated in many port cities of the Ottoman Empire, as well as inland hubs at the crossroads of trade and cultural exchanges. The confluence of heterodox religious beliefs, fluidity of movement between communities, and the Sufi Bektashi infiltration into settled Christian populations along with conversions, intermarriage, and proximity allowed for interreligious and cultural mixings that flourished and marked many spaces. The dervish orders of Sufi mystical saints, who traveled into the West alongside Ottoman warriors and who

settled the Christian lands, represented one way of thinking that differed from another more orthodox view of Sunni Islam. They forged the crucial alliances that brought multiple groups of diverse populations together. The possibility for coexistence between religions became known across the empire, stretching from the North African edges to the Arab provinces and the Balkans.

Places of mixed worship were found in many of the important cities and ports where Christians, Jews, and Muslims lived in urban contiguity, which continue to flourish today.¹ Although Istanbul is largely losing its multicultural edge and becoming the homogenous “cultural” capital of a forcefully Sunni state, pockets of inter-devotional comings and goings, well-kept secrets of joint prayer and worship, are maintained. Practices of sharing religious spaces have survived centuries of change, exposing a rich and textured fabric of mixed traditions, integrated narratives, and jointly conjured beliefs and superstitions. In these shared spaces, different religious groups constantly innovate within a traditional practice to accommodate each other in the culture of the space, while remaining mindful of why they belong. I grew up in Istanbul and visited a few of these sites without much awareness of their importance in terms of inter-devotional practice. Much later, I returned to observe and study a few Greek Orthodox churches, where the clergy and congregants open their doors to Armenian Christians, Jews, Muslims, and other interested groups who might participate in an interreligious experience.

Nowadays, the European and the Asian borders of Istanbul are strewn with small Greek or Armenian churches, many of which have been shared by different religious groups over the centuries. The Greek Orthodox churches, often small neighborhood houses of worship, remain sites of pilgrimage as they contain a source of “holy water” (*aghiasma*) that helps heal illnesses and bring numerous benefits to those who visit and pray there. Early travelers compare the holy water–related worship to the sanctity of the Pool of Bethesda.² Named after its location in the Vefa/Unkapani neighborhood, Vefa is also known as the First of the Month Church or the Church of the Mother of God, and is well attended by Muslims and some Jews at the start of each month. While the church is not particularly beautiful, its history is linked to the last emperor of the Byzantine Empire, Constantine XI Palaeologus, who is said to have been buried in the square where the church was later built. Destroyed by the Ottomans, a church was rebuilt much later when the site’s *aghiasma* was rediscovered in the eighteenth century, after which the church acquired saintly healing powers and its noble reputation. Today thousands of Istanbulites regularly visit to make a wish and be blessed.

Another important neighborhood church in Istanbul is that of Saint Demetrios in Kuruçesme, which conducts a special Saturday

¹ See Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); and Karen Barkey, “Religious Pluralism, Shared Sacred Sites, and the Ottoman Empire,” in *Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites: Religion, Politics and Conflict Resolution*, ed. Elazar Barkan and Karen Barkey (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), pp. 33–68.

² Thomas Allom and Robert Walsh, *Constantinople and the Scenery of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor* (London: Fisher & Son, 1839), p. 29. The Pool of Bethesda is a pool of water associated with healing described in the Gospel of John and located in Jerusalem.

morning mass every week. Muslims and Jews alike are welcome to pray, fill a small plastic bottle with the *aghiasma*, and receive a blessing by the priest during this weekly mass. The first iteration of the church dates to the mid-fifteenth century and is said to have been built on the ruins of an ancient temple dedicated to either Demeter or Isis. It collapsed some time later. But according to local tradition, the Ottoman Sultan Selim III, who was moved by the sight of the flickering candles of Christians praying at the ruins of the former church, gave permission for it to be rebuilt in 1798. The sacred spring in this church of Saint Demetrios is well known in Istanbul for its healing capacities, such as curing children who cannot walk or talk and for helping women with breastfeeding. There is a deeply established tradition that links the spring at the end of the carved tunnel, attached to the southern wall of the church, with healing powers. According to Nikos Atzemoglou, mothers would drizzle their children with holy water or leave a piece of their children’s clothing at the spring, wishing for health, and mute children would be cured after biting the iron toggles by the faucet.³ A walled marble icon of Saint Demetrios marks the sanctity of the water that flows through the rock. Today, the soggy rock walls are covered with names and wishes in different languages, attesting to the regular visits of diverse groups of worshippers.

A shrine with a rich collection of chronicles that describe the healing powers of *aghiasma* is the Zoodochus Pege-Balikli/Balouklu Church (also known as the Church of Saint Mary of the Spring). There

Thomas Allom, Baluklu Church in Istanbul, in *Constantinople and the Scenery of Seven Churches*, 1838. The New York Public Library



³ Nikos Atzemoglou, *T’Agiasmata tis Polis [Sacred Springs of Istanbul]* (Athens: Risos, 1990), pp. 104–05.

are multiple Byzantine, Greek, and Roman legends about the power of this church, which brings people together. Greeks and Turks share a parable about this site: a Greek man warned an old Byzantine priest of the likelihood of the Ottomans conquering Constantinople, just as the Ottomans began their efforts to seize the city. The priest declared that if the fish he was busily frying returned to its “natural element,” then the Ottomans would conquer the city. It is told that the fish leapt from the pan into the holy water where it swam within the church.⁴ The value of this story lies in its constructed meaning, in that the space became sacred for both Christians and Muslims, while also acquiring the nickname of Balikli (Balouklu as Greeks called it). In the nineteenth century, the church welcomed upward of forty thousand pilgrims, Turks and Armenians jointly with Greeks.⁵ In the illustration of the Baluklu Church by Thomas Allom, we see both a sick man who has been brought in on a stretcher to be washed with the holy water and healed, and the case containing the votive candles that visitors continue to buy today, which support the church. The lights of the candles and prayers in the church are also believed to contribute to the well-being of the faithful.

The Aya Yorgi Church, also known as the Saint George Greek Orthodox Monastery, on the island of Büyükada off the coast of the Marmara Sea is another such place of shared pilgrimage. Every year Aya Yorgi is overwhelmed with visitors on two important days: April 23 and September 24. In particular the 23rd of April, which corresponds to Saint George’s day and the festival of spring in the Muslim tradition, Hidrilliz, can bring up to twenty thousand visitors of various backgrounds and religions onto the island for a day of pilgrimage, prayer, and wish making. Muslims have fully adopted these traditions, incorporating both Saint George and Hidrilliz into their narratives. When participating in the pilgrimage, worshippers climb the hill in silence and buy a key or a bell from the church, where they pray, appeal to God for worldly wishes, and then linger at the top of the hill to exchange thoughts, wisdom, and stories. When a visitor’s wishes are satisfied, they are encouraged to revisit the pilgrimage site to return the object that they bought. These pilgrimage days are carefully choreographed to allow for prayer and worship inside the monastery, as well as to provide a space for worshippers to mingle and build a community outside. Various evangelical groups have also recently favored the space, considering the days of pilgrimage to be particular opportunities to capture the attention of non-Christians.

In each of these churches, non-Christian devotees light candles, pray, and follow traditional Greek Orthodox practices, mimicking the traditions of Christians. As they finish their worship, they line up in front of the priest, often waiting a while, for one brief minute of sacred blessings. While waiting, especially after the rituals in the courtyard (as in Vefa), or in the garden-like space behind the monastery (as in Aya Yorgi), or even in the antechamber where everyone is served tea and cookies (as in Saint Demetrios), the secular people and faithful of different religions

talk, exchange suggestions and advice, compare traditions, and distribute sugar cubes and candy. In this space, each devotee is aware of the other’s religion. Muslims clearly express their Muslim identity. They are not here to convert; they are here to partake in the bounty of the Christian saints, in the relief offered by the holy water, and the assistance extended by the priests who navigate the masses with care and attention. The rationale of the priests is that worshippers of all faiths belong since this is the house of a shared God. The visitors hasten to add that they have a cultural geography of saintly spaces that they visit regularly, Muslim shrines and Greek churches, each for their benefit and wisdom.

Here while talking to each other, Christians, Jews, and Muslims recognize their otherness, but often also contribute to the construction of a momentary memory: that of the Ottoman past with its astonishing synergism, its cosmopolitan flavor, and its tolerant imperial order. For so many the monastery, churches, and small private chapels are not only remnants of a vibrant Byzantine culture, but also of an Ottoman overlay on the Byzantine with an identifiable aesthetic and traditional expression. The history is not one of a singular advance, but many encounters, turns, and detours that regardless brought people of different faiths and social standing together in a day of joint worship and accelerated community. Secular worshippers converge on the notion of a better time—a cosmopolitan empire that enabled the best of diversity.

Possessing tremendous religious, ethnic, and linguistic diversity, the Ottoman Empire gave rise to many forms of coexistence,

Thomas Allom, *Monastery of Saint George on Prinkipo, Büyükada, Turkey*, 1838



⁴ Allom and Walsh, *Constantinople*, pp. 29–30.

⁵ Benoit Fliche, “Participating without Converting: The Case of Muslims Attending St. Anthony’s Church in Istanbul,” in *Religious Conversions in the Mediterranean*

World, ed. Nadia Marzouki and Olivier Roy (Palgrave: MacMillan, 2013), pp. 162–75. See also Henry Carnoy and Jean Nicolaidès, *Le Folklore de Constantinople* (Paris: E. Lechevalier, 1893), pp. 54–60.



peaceful or otherwise, that now offer us a genuine laboratory of research possibilities that have yet to be exhausted. There is ample proof that the Ottoman Empire is still relevant to discussions of diversity. The organization of religious communities is understood as a relatively successful historical example of ruling diversity. We see here the effect of a long-standing cultural and religious synergy, a society that has for many centuries had a high level of Christian-Muslim interaction and has developed certain ritual practices and symbols, some of which have been absorbed and exchanged overtime, without a full merging of religious traditions. Such similarities between practices, traditions, and meanings attest to a larger cultural field that has been articulated over centuries. An awareness has been passed down through generations, collecting local knowledge about cures and remedies, expanding upon forms of instruction and learning, and sharing information about habits, skills, and dispositions. Many visitors to shared sites nowadays mention Ottoman practice, their ancestors, and their immediate grandparents and family as embedded in these common solutions to daily life. A young Muslim woman who came to Vefa with her friends told of how her grandmother use to visit churches and take her when she was a young girl, but then added: “no self-respecting Istanbulu lives here and does not know about the many churches. It is part of the mix of Istanbul. We go to church, we go to *yatiris* [Muslim shrines]. This touring from site to site brings us closer to understanding each other.”

The compilation of such modes of coexistence represents the habitus of the Ottoman lands, the semiconscious solutions, and instincts that made people navigate their daily lives by participating in multiple religious and cultural institutions at once, facilitated by the fluidity of boundaries and the multivocality of messages. People explicitly bring back memories of these past practices as carried out by their ancestors in order to partake in a sense of nostalgia.



Previous spread:
Cécile Massie, *Tradition Says That the String Must Not Break If the Pilgrims Want Their Wishes to Come True*, Büyükada, Turkey, 2016

Cécile Massie, *Strings Unrolled by the Pilgrims during Their Ascent to the Monastery of Saint George*, Büyükada, Turkey, 2016

Opposite:
Cécile Massie, *Woman Writing Down Her Prayer to Be Deposited inside the Church of Saint George*, Büyükada, Turkey, 2016



Manoël Pénicaud

INTERLACED VOTIVE STRINGS

BÜYÜKADA, TURKEY, 2014

PHOTOGRAPH

PRIVATE COLLECTION

On April 23, Saint George's Day, tens of thousands of Muslims go to the Christian Greek Orthodox monastery on the island of Büyükada, off the coast of Istanbul. Many women tie thread to a shrub and then walk the path to the Christian sanctuary in silence, unspooling reels of thread to materialize their vows. Then the dirt road with its multicolored and interwoven threads resembles a cheerful weaver's loom. By the end of the day, these threads have been transformed into a vast spiderweb of anonymous hopes, without distinction between faiths.

A sample of them has been gathered and saved on the spot before their destruction by municipal road services. This ritual materiality is a concrete and powerful expression of the shared and interlaced religiosity by anonymous pilgrims, both Christians and Muslims. The shared pilgrimage is certainly the most important—regarding attendance—in the contemporary religious landscape of the Mediterranean and Middle East.
—MP





Manoël Pénicaud,
*Muslim Women in the Holy
Sepulcher, Jerusalem, 2014*
(detail, see p. 180)

A Photographic Survey of Shared Holy Places

Manoël Pénicaud

At first view the practice of sharing the sacred is not easy to concretely depict in an exhibition. In the field of art history, very few artists have illustrated holy places shared by the faithful of different religions. In fact, painters and sculptors have rarely presented interfaith sites or rituals in their work. Most religious art has been historically mono-confessional and non-interreligious. Exceptions, however, concern the drawings and writings of pilgrims and travelers, which testify to religious crossings such as in the Holy Land. Accounts of their journeys often describe lively interactions in sanctuaries dedicated to Abraham, Elijah, Mary, Saint George, and other shared holy figures.

Nevertheless this general lack of artistic representation is not an end in itself. While searching for recent works focused on interreligious aspects, I decided to privilege photography and film to make the act of sharing visible and understandable. Photography is both an art form and a pillar of visual anthropology. After the discipline emerged in the second part of the nineteenth century, former anthropologists began using photography as a tool to capture their fieldwork. The same phenomenon occurred later with the emergence of film. For example, French ethnologists used film cameras during their famous Dakar-Djibouti mission from 1931 to 1933. Then in the 1940s, another French ethnologist André Leroi-Gourhan (1911–1986) considered the camera as a very useful notepad for the researcher during his fieldwork.¹ In other words, serving as more than just a notebook on a filmstrip, photography and film became efficient ways to write and to practice anthropology.

Aware of this methodological principle, I have used a camera on many ethnographic fieldwork projects since 2000. This practice became systematic while studying a Muslim pilgrimage in Morocco. My research was not yet directly linked to shared holy places, but was focused on the Sufi brotherhood of Regragas. According to tradition, Regragas would have converted from Christianity to Islam in the seventh century. Each year they participate in a forty-day pilgrimage, visiting the holy tombs of their ancestors.²



Manoël Pénicaud,
Muslim Procession along
the Jewish and Christian
Cemeteries, Essaouira,
Morocco, 2004

On April 1, 2004, I was strategically posted above the northern gate of the city of Essaouira to photograph the Sufi procession. It was an exceptional view with explicit references to the three monotheisms: the Muslim brotherhood passing along Jewish and Christian cemeteries. This picture shows the interreligious crossings and overlapping in Essaouira, famous for its tolerance and religious coexistence.

¹ See André Leroi-Gourhan, "Cinéma et sciences humaines: le film ethnologique existe-t-il?" *Revue de géographie humaine et d'ethnographie* 3 (1948), pp. 42–51.

² See Manoël Pénicaud, *Dans la peau d'un autre: Pèlerinage insolite au Maroc avec les mages Regragas* (Paris: Presses de la Renaissance, 2007).

In the following years, I decided to always employ a camera as a tool for my research on shared holy places. The challenge was to include this tool in the participant observation method, in which the anthropologist aims to live in close familiarity with the observed group. The phenomena of sharing sacred spaces are quite frequent in the Mediterranean world but also very discreet. Worshippers temporarily cross religious boundaries without claiming their religious affiliation. Participant observation combined with a photographic approach has become the best way to capture this "inter-religiosity" in action.



Manoël Pénicaud,
The Seven Sleepers
Dolmen-Crypt of the
Christian-Muslim
Pilgrimage in Brittany,
Les Sept-Saints,
France, 2009

After Morocco, I studied the Christian-Muslim pilgrimage in the French region of Brittany for seven years. In 1954 the French Orientalist Louis Massignon (1883–1962) created an unexpected Christian-Muslim pilgrimage in Brittany. This interreligious pilgrimage was dedicated to the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, because these saints are venerated both in Christianity and Islam. This gathering, which is one of the oldest interreligious initiatives in France, is still active and takes place every year in July. The boat seen on the first plan is an ex-voto offered by Louis Massignon in reference to the Islamic interpretation of the Seven Sleepers.³ After researching this pilgrimage in Brittany, I traveled across the Mediterranean to visit and photograph many Christian and Muslim sites that are also dedicated to the Seven Sleepers.

This approach to a photographic survey became essential in the preparation of the first iteration of *Shared Sacred Sites* (or *Lieux saints partagés* in French) at the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations in Marseille, France, in 2015. Over three years, I traveled with my colleague Dionigi Albera from one site to another in Israel, Italy, Macedonia, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, West Bank, and so on. We wanted to bring contemporary and visual elements back to Marseille to materialize the tradition of sharing in our international exhibition.

³ Manoël Pénicaud, "The Seven Sleepers Pilgrimage in Brittany: Ambiguity of a Christian-Muslim Heterotopia," in *Pilgrimage and Ambiguity: Sharing*

the Sacred, ed. Angela Hobart and Thierry Zarcone (London: Sean Kingston Publishing, 2017), pp. 183–99. See Qur'an 18.

I have since continued to work systematically with a camera, presenting my results in new versions of the exhibition in Tunis, Thessaloniki, Paris, Marrakesh, and New York.

When examining a photographic survey of interfaith sites, one could prioritize pictures that present people, practices, and ritual performance central to the pilgrimage process. The following photographs depict shared religiosity and rituality.



Manoël Pénicaud,
Votive Sugar Cubes in
the Monastery of Saint
George, Büyükkada,
Turkey, 2014

On Saint George Day, thousands of visitors, mainly Muslims, attend the Greek Orthodox monastery located at the top of the island of Büyükkada near the coast of Istanbul. Most of them come to make wishes believing on the power of the Christian sacred space. Among numerous rituals, Muslim pilgrims silently place sugar cubes on the walls of the monastery.⁴ Each sugar cube materializes an anonymous wish.

Each year in Ephesus, Turkey, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims visit the Catholic shrine that is believed to be the last house of the Virgin Mary, and a possible place of her Assumption. But most of these pilgrims are not Christians.⁵ The Muslim woman illustrated here is a member of the Mevlevi Sufi order known as Whirling Dervishes. Every Christmas Day, she goes in pilgrimage to the House of Mary. Here she is reading the surah of Mary and she often religiously nibbles on a piece of communion host, which is seen in her Qur'an. Even though the host is not consecrated, it is still quite powerful for her.

⁴ See Karen Barkey, "The Greek Orthodox Churches of Istanbul," in this volume, pp. 161–69.

⁵ See Manoël Pénicaud, "Muslim Pilgrims at the House of Mary in Ephesus: Considerations on 'Open Sanctuaries' in the Mediterranean," in *The Idea of the Mediterranean*, ed. Mario Mignone (Stony Brook: Forum Italicum Publishing, 2017), pp. 166–83.

Manoël Pénicaud,
Muslim Woman Praying
with a Host inside
her Qur'an, Ephesus,
Turkey, 2010



Manoël Pénicaud,
Wishing Wall at the House
of Mary, Ephesus,
Turkey, 2010

Most of the visitors at the House of the Virgin Mary tie wishes onto a wall. Worshipers, both Christians and Muslims, but also tourists knot a piece of fabric, paper, or plastic to another piece. This practice forms "chains" of anonymous yearnings. This wishing wall is a powerful metaphor of the crisscrossing connections of so many desires coming from all over the world.



Manoël Pénicaud,
Muslim Visitors to Our
Lady of Lebanon, Harissa,
Lebanon, 2016



Manoël Pénicaud,
Our Lady of Zeitoun,
Place of Mary's
Apparitions, Cairo, 2009



Manoël Pénicaud,
Barefoot Pilgrim at the Tomb
of Mary, Jerusalem, 2015

Mary is a pivotal figure in Islam. Many Marian churches across the Mediterranean are visited by Muslims, primarily women, since Mary embodies and represents a model of motherhood. For example, Sunnis as well as Shiites attend the shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in Harissa on a daily basis.

This image shows the great veneration of Mary in the Coptic church of Our Lady of Zeitoun in Cairo. In 1968 the Virgin supposedly appeared on the roof of the church, a miracle witnessed by some Muslims working in the vicinity. It is quite common that the faithful of another religion witness such a miracle. This implication makes the miracle stronger and often legitimates the sharing of such a sacred site.

The most famous place linked to the tradition of Mary's Assumption is located in Jerusalem. Every year at the end of August—according to the Julian calendar—hundreds of pilgrims attend the holy site located close to the Garden of Gethsemane, between the Lion Gate and the Mount of Olives. The subterranean church is visited by several Christian denominations: Greek Orthodox, Armenians, Ethiopians, Syriacs, and Catholics. For centuries, the church even included a *mihrab* (a niche that marks the direction toward Mecca for Islamic prayer). Nowadays some Muslims women continue to discreetly worship there. In this picture, a Greek Orthodox woman lights a candle in the stairs of the holy church.



Manoël Pénicaud,
Muslim Women in the
Holy Sepulcher,
Jerusalem, 2014

As the place of veneration of Christ's resurrection, the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem is undoubtedly the holiest place in Christianity. However, it is also possible to observe Muslims entering and lighting candles around the aedicule of the tomb. They do so silently and discreetly without being disturbed by Greeks, Armenians, or Catholics who are in charge of the basilica. Another significant aspect is that one Muslim family keeps the key to the sanctuary, and another Muslim family is responsible for opening and closing the door every day and night. Inherited from the rules for coexistence enforced during the Ottoman era, this procedure was established as a means to avoid conflict between the Christian denominations vying for control of this holy place.

The Cave of the Patriarchs is another prime example of a holy place for the three religions. According to tradition, Abraham, Sarah,



Manoël Pénicaud,
Muslim Woman Praying
in the Cave of the
Patriarchs, Hebron,
West Bank, 2014

and their descendants are thought to be buried here in the heart of the city of Hebron, also called "Al-Khalil" in Arabic after the appellation of Abraham in the Qur'an ("the Friend of God"). Controlled in turn by Jews, Byzantines, Umayyads, Crusaders, Mamluks, and Ottomans, the space is known for its many shifts of control and superimpositions of belief.

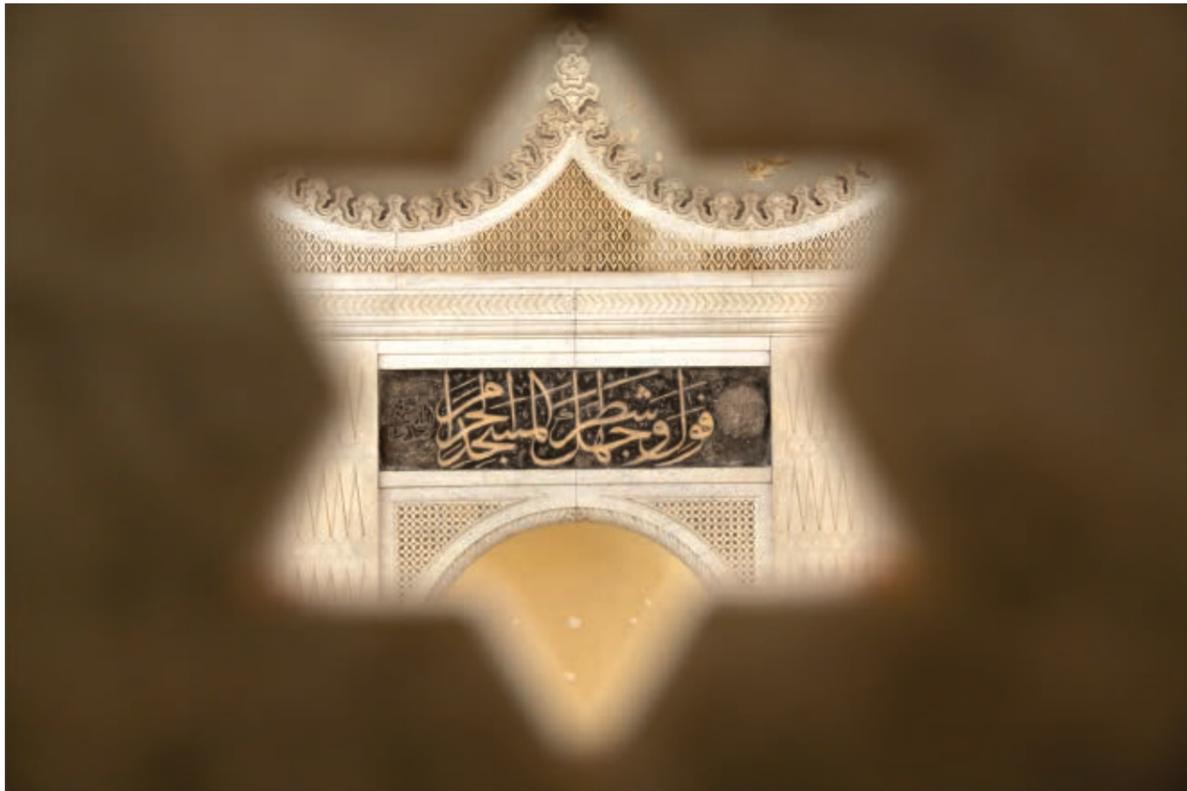
Since 1967 this site has been physically subdivided into two parts, one for Muslims, another for Jews. Despite the fact that the place has become a focal point for the deepest tensions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Muslims in one side and Jews in the other maintain their devotions under the control of the Israeli army. Christians can visit the two spaces of the shrine, but Palestinians cannot enter the Jewish part.

A photographic survey also illustrates the contiguity or superimposition of religious elements into the architecture of holy places. Visible examples are numerous in the Balkans, which was dominated by the Ottoman Empire for centuries.

Since antiquity, the island of Crete in Greece has known many occupants—Romans, Arabs, Venetians, Crusaders, Ottomans—that have made it a crossroads of cultures and religions. After the island was conquered by the Ottomans in the middle of the seventeenth century, most of the churches were converted into mosques. Then at the end of the nineteenth century, when the Ottomans left the island, mosques were converted back into churches. Minarets are still present in some of these buildings, like the church of Saint Nicholas in the city of Chania.

Manoël Pénicaud,
Saint Nicholas Church
and Minaret, Chania,
Greece, 2016





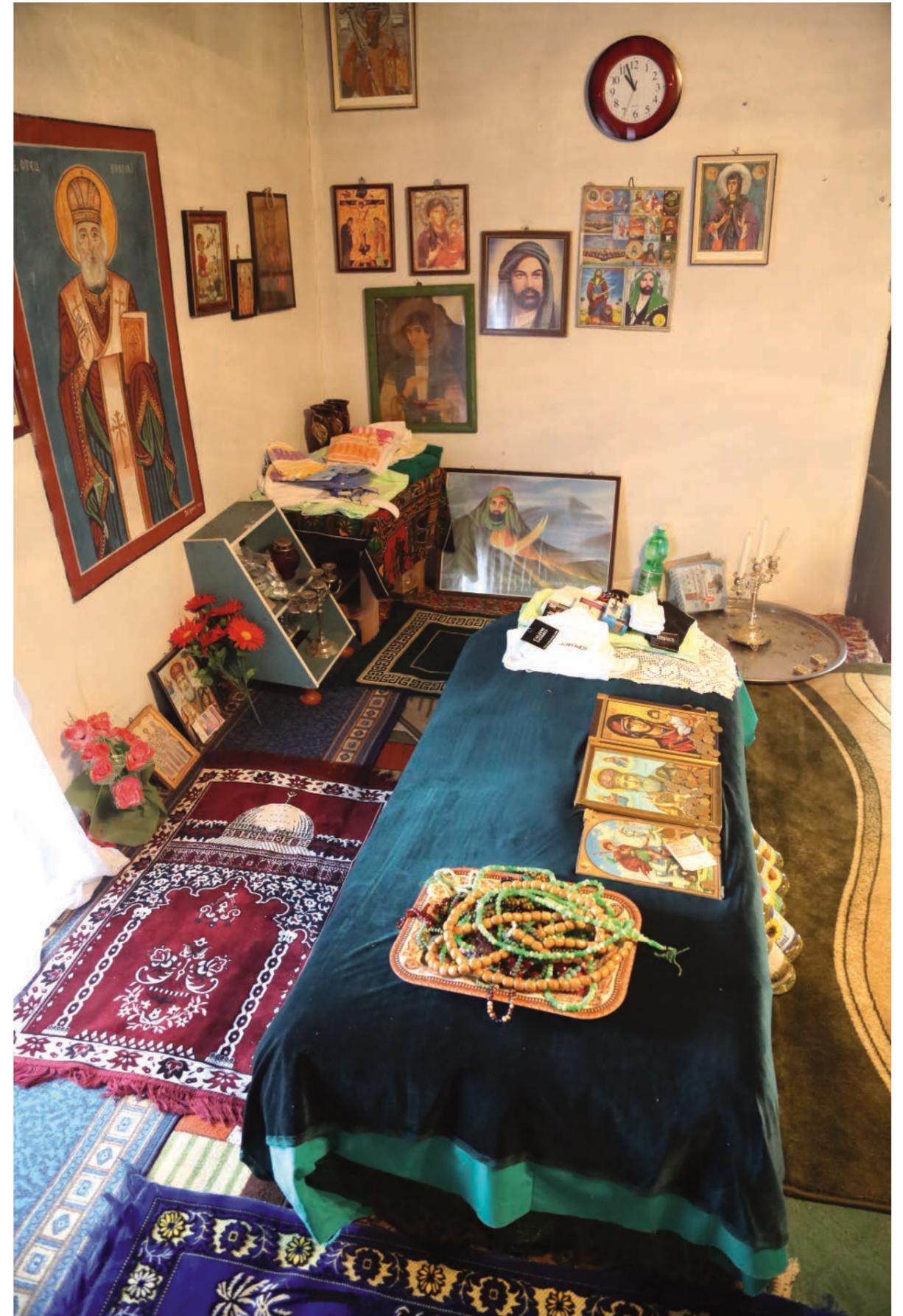
In many areas of the Ottoman Empire, as well as in northern Greece, a number of Jews publicly converted to Islam in the seventeenth century, following the messianic figure of Sabbatai Zevi (1626–1676). Some of these converts, called *dönmeh* (meaning turncoats—a pejorative term in Turkish) secretly kept their beliefs. In Thessaloniki, Greece, a famous mosque was expressly built for them in the nineteenth century. The Yeni Cami Mosque includes many Stars of David, discreetly embedded into the interior architecture as an implicit reminder of their Jewish ancestry.

In the Republic of Macedonia, a small Orthodox church dedicated to Saint Nicholas is frequented by Muslims, mainly Bektashis and Alevis, who believe that the place is the *türbe* (“tomb”) of Hıdr Baba, also known as “Khıdr” or “the Green One.” Every sixth of May on the feast day of Saint George, Christians celebrate mass in the morning while Muslims pray in the afternoon. For the latter, this is the feast of Hidrellez, a sacred day linked to the Islamic holy figures Hıdr and Elijah (Ilyas).

Despite its general reprobation of images of humans and animals, Islam is not fully absent of icons. Representations are practiced in Shiite and Sufi orders like Bektashism. Present in the Balkans, the Bektashis follow a spiritual path that is characterized by a religious fluidity, which can accommodate Christian teachings and cross borders. In Thessaly in central Greece, an old monastery formally dedicated

Manoël Pénicaud, *Star of David and Mihrab in the Yeni Cami Mosque, Thessaloniki, Greece, 2016*

Opposite: Manoël Pénicaud, *Christian Chapel and Muslim Türbe (Tomb), Makedonski Brod, Republic of Macedonia, 2014*





Manoël Pénicaud,
Mother and Child at the
Entrance of Durbali
Sultan Baba, Thessaly
region, Greece, 2016

to Mary was converted centuries ago into a Bektashi center (*tekke*). Albanian Muslims who immigrated to the area in the 1990s or 2000s began taking care of the old building, which is also attended by Greek Orthodox Christians. Behind the mother and child, one can see a mix of Muslim and Christian at the entrance of the shrine.

This last picture shows a singular bas-relief carved by a Catholic Cistercian friar on the facade of the church of Aiguebelle Abbey in Montjoyer, South of France. This message of interreligious coexistence is also a tribute to the seven monks of Tibhirine in Algeria, who tragically disappeared in May 1996. Nevertheless, these friars lived in harmony with their Algerian Muslim neighbors and hosts. Nowadays Muslims piously visit the Tibhirine site in Algeria and the seven tombs of the monks. The seven monks were beatified in January 2018.

This photographic survey of shared holy places aims to depict and testify to the various contexts of interfaith practices. Photography is certainly one of the most obvious ways to make these phenomena visible and understandable. The ethnographical methodology of participant observation converges concretely with the documentary approach of photography, emphasizing patience and discretion in the field. Moreover, one has to be perfectly positioned within time and place to “capture” the scene with a camera. Anthropologists and photographers often share this aptitude of constant observation—when the focal moment has passed, it is too late.

Photography provides a human impression of the interreligious shared practices. It gives a concrete sense of the people, their practices, and the holy places, much more than texts or artifacts can.



Manoël Pénicaud,
Bas-Relief of the Church
of the Aiguebelle Abbey,
Montjoyer, France, 2016

Interfaith Bridge Builders

Manoël Pénicaud

As indicated in the introduction to this catalogue, the hospitality of religious otherness is a common denominator of the *Shared Sacred Sites* exhibition. In most of the cases featured in this publication, the presence of believers of a different religion is more or less tolerated, occasionally even accepted by other pilgrims or the religious groups that are in charge of these sanctuaries. In certain situations, the participation of the “Other” is encouraged in the name of the hospitality given by the father of monotheisms, Abraham, to three strangers at the oak of Mamre, according to the Bible and the Qur’an.¹ This inclusive tradition toward the other—who is potentially a source of grace—is still active in Mediterranean societies, mainly on the eastern and southern shores of the region, while the duty of hospitality has considerably declined in Europe, where the stranger is often perceived as a threat or danger, particularly when he is from another religion such as Islam. To better understand this growing hostility, one must examine the Latin etymology. With shared linguistic origins, hospitality and hostility represent two polar relationships with the other.

Aware of this structural ambivalence, singular figures of our contemporary world, either famous or anonymous, practice and perpetuate this hospitality of religious otherness in sanctuaries that they administer in their own way, sometimes in contradiction with the normative prescriptions of institutions. The reception of the

other is concretely practiced through a series of rituals of hospitality inscribed in a religiosity that goes beyond the strict field of established orthodoxy. Some of these bridge builders have even created real places of interreligious hospitality and sharing.² These spaces operate as utopias realized and localized in space, similar to the “heterotopias” conceptualized by the French philosopher Michel Foucault: “other places” and a priori unexpected.³

It is necessary, however, to make an important distinction between such shared places due to the initiatives of interreligious entrepreneurs (or bridge builders) and the shared holy places frequented without the decisive intervention of such persons. In fact, the phenomenon of sharing is often characterized by spontaneous intentions of faithful who do not hesitate to cross religious boundaries in order to be blessed by a divine grace. Most of the time, ritual efficiency is the matrix of their journeys. Their expectations are often pragmatic, concerning children, health, marriage, success in studies and business, protection against bad luck, among other issues. Worshippers attend a certain sanctuary because of its spiritual and magnetic power, despite its religious and institutional affiliation that they do not necessarily care about. From an anthropological perspective, they can be seen as “exopraxes,” which means that they borrow both the place and the rituals (praxis) of the religious otherness. In that case “exopraxis” concerns the practice of the place of the other, whether considered orthodox or heterodox.

The situation is a bit different when bridge builders intervene and intermediate with the intention of interreligious hospitality. They are not necessarily actors of the interfaith dialogue, but they work to build their own ideal (or heterotopia) through a top-down process. In their own way, these entrepreneurs of coexistence testify to various attitudes of openness toward the other. Their experiences are not limited to the erudite circles of the dialogue of religions with institutional and political agendas. They are also driven by a mystical process that transcends respective affiliations, as well as by a religiosity shared by the faithful in search of ritual efficiency. From there, a form of inter-religiousness takes shape. The hospitality practiced by bridge builders is much more than a theological concept. It covers something often lived on the ground level, in the sharing of a place, in the belief in a holy figure, in a healing desire. These common expectations extend beyond confessional boundaries and are the bedrock of the phenomenon of shared sacred sites.

¹ See Genesis 18 and the Qur’an 11, 15, 51.

² See Manoël Pénicaud, “Passeurs d’hospitalité interreligieuse,” in *Coexistences*, ed. Dionigi Albera and Manoël Pénicaud (Arles, France: Actes Sud-MNHI, 2017), pp. 97–107.

³ See Michel Foucault, “Des espaces autres,” in *Dits et écrits II* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), pp. 1571–81; Manoël Pénicaud, “The Seven Sleepers Pilgrimage in Brittany: Ambiguity of a Christian-Muslim heterotopia,” in *Pilgrimages and Ambiguity: Sharing the Sacred*, ed. Angela Hobart and Thierry Zarcone (London: Sean Kingston Publishing, 2017), pp. 183–99.



Manoël Pénicaud,
Father Paolo Dall'Oglio in
the Mar Mûsa Monastery,
Mar Mûsa, Syria, 2011

Manoël Pénicaud

INTERVIEW WITH FATHER PAOLO DALL'OGGIO

MARSEILLE, FRANCE, 2013

FILM, 3 MINUTES, 30 SECONDS

PRODUCTION: MUCEM—IDEMEC (CNRS), FRANCE, 2015

Father Paolo Dall'Oglio (1954–?) is one of the bridge builders who have furthered the experience of interreligious hospitality. The Italian Jesuit priest has defined himself as “lover of Islam and believer in Jesus,” and has devoted his life to dialogue and reconciliation between the two religions.¹ At the age of twenty-eight in 1982, he discovered an abandoned monastery while on a spiritual retreat traveling through a mountainous desert in Syria. There he decided to restore this eleventh-century building. Ordained in the Syriac Catholic rite, he became the leader of the Mar Mûsa monastery, which he dedicated to the Abrahamic hospitality. In 1991 he founded the al-Khalil monastic community, referencing the Qur'anic name of Abraham, the Friend of God. Worshippers including Christians of all denominations, nonbelievers, tourists, and Muslims living in the area traveled to visit the monastery. Fifty thousand people from all over the world visited in 2010. Then the war started. Dall'Oglio defended the “revolution” and was expelled from Syria the following year. He returned illegally in 2013 while seeking to release Christian and Muslim prisoners, and was captured in Raqqa by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. From host to hostage, there has since been no concrete news about him.

In the interview presented in the exhibition, Dall'Oglio tells the story of a Muslim Bedouin woman “in love with Jesus,” who wanted to commune during mass at the Mar Mûsa monastery. He explains his dilemma that it was forbidden—according to the canon law—to give her the communion host because she was not baptized. Yet since she was crying, he came about to mystically believe that she was sincerely baptized by her tears.

—Manoël Pénicaud

¹ See Dall'Oglio, *Amoureux de l'islam, croyant en Jésus* (Paris: Editions de l'Atelier, 2009); and Manoël Pénicaud, “Le Père Paolo Dall'Oglio: Otage volontaire par amour de l'islam,” *Ethnologie française* 3, no. 46 (Presses Universitaires de France, 2016).

Manoël Pénicaud

INTERVIEW WITH CHEIKH KHALED BENTOUNÈS

PARIS, 2017

FILM, 6 MINUTES, 46 SECONDS

PRODUCTION: MUCEM—IDEMEC (CNRS), FRANCE, 2017

Born in the Algerian city of Mostaganem in 1949, Khaled Bentounès became the spiritual leader of the Alâwiyya, a Sufi order that dates back to the prophet Mohamed, after the death of his father in 1975. Sufism is the mystical branch of Islam that preaches divine uniqueness and openness to religious otherness, trying to represent a face of Islam other than the exclusivist and fundamentalist one that is growing in several parts of the world. The Alâwiyya group currently includes tens of thousands of followers, including in Europe.

Bentounès now travels the world to promote peace, gender equality, and environmental protection. He also chairs the nongovernmental organization International Sufi Association Alâwiyya (AISA), which proposed the “International Day of Living Together in Peace” project to the General Assembly of the United Nation in New York. In December 2017, 193 countries unanimously adopted this resolution.

A religious and political entrepreneur of world coexistence, Bentounès explains in this interview his conception of Abrahamic hospitality and of shared holy places within the interview: “They are therapeutic places and oases that must be protected” against the peril of contemporary religious fundamentalisms.

—Manoël Pénicaud

Manoël Pénicaud,
Cheikh Khaled Bentounès
in Paris, 2017





Manoël Pénicaud,
*Nikos Stavroulakis leading
the Shabbat in Etz Hayyim
Synagogue, Chania,
Greece, 2016*

Manoël Pénicaud
THE LAST RABBI OF CRETE

CHANIA, GREECE, 2017
FILM, 6 MINUTES
PRODUCTION: MUCEM—IDEMEC (CNRS), FRANCE, 2017

Nikos Stavroulakis (1932–2017), the last rabbi of the Etz Hayyim Synagogue in Chania, traveled to Crete in 1994 in order to rebuild the island’s oldest synagogue as a new sacred space open to all who wish to worship and participate in the brotherhood of Abraham. The construction of the place as a “havurah,” a brotherhood of sorts where Friday prayers welcome Jews, non-Jews, believers of different faiths, and nonbelievers, grew from a synergetic understanding that Rabbi Stavroulakis brought to the space as well as from local attitudes toward unstructured and instinctive interfaith practices.

Although the rabbi insisted on maintaining the synagogue as a synagogue, he simultaneously opened the house of worship to other faiths willing to enter. His willing accommodation of the text to reflect coexistence also does not contradict the essence of this holy place. Adjusting the liturgy, he would welcome the other during prayer as he did for Shabbat services in April 2016: “Welcome in the name of our community, which is a rather strange community. . . . Blessed are Thou, Lord, who spreadest the shelter of peace over us, Thy people of Israel, the Children of Ishmael, and Jerusalem, and all Mankind. Amen!”

—Karen Barkey

Manoël Pénicaud

SAINT NICHOLAS CHURCH IN NEW YORK

NEW YORK, 2017

FILM, 4 MINUTES, 48 SECONDS

PRODUCTION: MUCEM—IDEMEC (CNRS), FRANCE, 2017

New York, the city that experienced the devastating destruction and loss of life on September 11, 2001, is also one of the most vibrant multicultural cities in the world. As such, frequent sites and examples of coexistence often regenerate in this urban space. One such ideal will transpire with the opening of the Greek Orthodox Church of Saint Nicholas, which is currently under construction at the site of Ground Zero where the former Saint Nicholas church was destroyed in 2001. A project developed by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America to be opened and consecrated by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople in the following years, the church will include a nondenominational space on the second floor where people of any faith may pray or meditate in their own fashion.

While the traditional Greek Orthodox church is open to all for worship, the construction of this particular space allotted for multi-faith prayer and contemplation further reflects the contemporary need to find meaningful spaces and moments to heal and restore. Designed by Santiago Calatrava, the new sacred building is inspired by Hagia Sophia and blends the traditional Byzantine style with a novel twist—visitors are encouraged to mark their presence and write wishes on the concrete shell of the building under construction.

—Karen Barkey

Manoël Pénicaud, Saint
Nicholas Greek Orthodox
Church on the Ground Zero
Area, New York, 2017



Checklist

The New York Public Library

Bernadino Amico
Sketch of the Tomb of Mary in *Trattato delle Piante & Immagini de Sacri Edifizi di Terra Santa* (Treatise of the plans and images of the sacred buildings of the Holy Land)
Florence: P. Cecconcelli, 1620
The New York Public Library
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Art and Architecture Collection
pages 76–77

Laurent d'Arvieux
“Camp des arabes sur le mont Carmel” (Arabs’ camp on Mount Carmel) in *Voyage fait par ordre du roy Louis XIV dans la Palestine* (Journey in Palestine ordered by King Louis XIV)
Paris: André Gailleau, 1717
The New York Public Library
General Research Division

Félix Bonfils
Abraham’s Oak at Hebron, Palestine
Albumen silver print, 1870–85
The New York Public Library
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Photography Collection

Félix Bonfils
Coupole de l’Ascension, intérieure (Cupola of the Ascension, interior)
Albumen silver print, ca. 1870–85
The New York Public Library
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Photography

Félix Bonfils
Mur des Juifs, vue d’ensemble (The Jews’ wailing place, general view)
Albumen silver print, 1870–85
The New York Public Library
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Photography Collection
page 40

Félix Bonfils
Pilgrims Entering Bethlehem, Palestine, on Christmas Day
Albumen silver print, 1870–85
The New York Public Library
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Photography Collection

Félix Bonfils
Tomb of the Virgin Mary
Albumen silver print, 1870–85
The New York Public Library
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Photography Collection

Félix Bonfils
Tombeau de David sur le Mont Sion (Tomb of David on Mount Zion)
Albumen silver print, ca. 1870–85
The New York Public Library
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Photography Collection

Félix Bonfils
Vue générale de l’emplacement du temple de Salomon (General view of the site of Solomon’s temple)
Albumen silver print, 1870–85
The New York Public Library
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Photography Collection
page 42

Bernhard von Breydenbach, author
Erhard Reuwich, illustrator
Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam (Pilgrimage to the Holy Land)
Mainz: Erhard Reuwich, 1486
The New York Public Library
Rare Book Division
pages 46–47

Cornelis de Bruyn
“Casa de Matarea” in *Voyage au Levant* (Voyage to the Levant)
Paris: Guillaume Cavelier, 1714
The New York Public Library
General Research Division
page 65

De la Twyere Psalter
York, England, 1304–10
The New York Public Library
Spencer Collection
pages 56–57

Pedanius Dioscorides, author
Mirzā Bāqir, scribe and illustrator
Balsam tree in Kitāb Disquindis fīmauādd al-‘ilāj (Arabic translation of De Materia Medica, or “On Medical Materials”)
Tehran, 1st century CE, translated and copied 1899
The New York Public Library
Spencer Collection

Francis Frith
“Street view in Jerusalem, with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre” in *The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments*
Glasgow: W. Mackenzie, 1862–63
The New York Public Library
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Photography Collection
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Francis Frith
“View at Hebron” in *The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments*
Glasgow: W. Mackenzie, 1862–63
The New York Public Library
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Photography Collection

Agostino Giustiniani, O.P., editor
Psalterium, Hebraeum, Graecum, Arabicum, Chaldaicum (Psalter, in Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, and Aramaic)
Genoa: Petrus Paulus Porrus, 1516
The New York Public Library
Rare Book Division
pages 96–97

Wenceslas Hollar after
Juan Bautista Villalpando
View of Jerusalem
Etching, 1660
The New York Public Library
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection
pages 36 and 38

Ketubbah with Abraham and Jacob
Monferrato, Italy, Aug. 16, 1782
The New York Public Library
Dorot Jewish Division
pages 52–53

Léon de Laborde
“View of the Convent of Saint Catherine” in *Voyage de l’Arabie Pétrée* (Travels in Arabia Petrea)
Paris: Giard, 1830
The New York Public Library
Rare Book Division
pages 58–59

John Martin
The Ascent of Elijah
Etching and mezzotint, 1824
The New York Public Library
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection

Master of Spencer 6 (perhaps
Laurent Boiron), illuminator
The Annunciation
Book of Hours, Use of Rome
Bourges, France, ca. 1505–10
The New York Public Library
Spencer Collection
pages 70–71

Henry Maundrell
Depiction of Mount Carmel in *A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, at Easter, A.D. 1697*
London: Meadows, 1749
The New York Public Library
Rare Book Division
page 45

Luigi Mayer
“Grotto of the Nativity” in *Views in the Ottoman Dominions*
London: T. Bensley, 1810
The New York Public Library
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection
page 60

Antonio Medina
Hebron, Cave of the Patriarchs in *Viaggio di Terra Santa* (Travels in the Holy Land)
Florence: Giorgio Marescotti, 1590
The New York Public Library
Spencer Collection

Ishaq ibn Ibrahim
al-Nishāpūrī Qazwin
Qisas al-Anbiyā (Tales of the Prophets)
Iran, 11th century, copied 1577–80
The New York Public Library
Spencer Collection
pages 78, 81, 83–85, and 87

André du Ryer
Historia de Abrahamo eversione Alcorano (Life of Abraham in Latin, extracted from the Qur’an)
Lugduni Batavorum, Ex officina Elsevier, Acad. typogr. Sumptibus auctoris, 1655
The New York Public Library
Rare Book Division

George Sale, translator
Koran
London, Printed by C. Ackers for J. Wilcox, 1734
The New York Public Library
Rare Book Division

Scene of Abraham Hosting Angels
The Gospel According to Luke
Russia, 15th century
The New York Public Library
Spencer Collection
pages 50–51

Scenes of Abraham, Sarah, Ishmael, Isaac, and Hagar in *Weltchronik* (Chronicle of the World)
Bavaria, 1402
The New York Public Library
Spencer Collection
pages 54–55

Seven Sleepers in *Sanctorum septem dormientium historia* (History of the Seven Holy Sleepers)
Rome: Pagliarini, 1741
The New York Public Library
General Research Division
pages 90–91

Jacob Sofer ben Judah Leib Shamash of Berlin, scribe
Illustration of the Second Temple in *Jerusalem in a Haggadah*
Reproduction; Hamburg, 1731
The New York Public Library
Dorot Jewish Division

Jacob Sofer ben Judah Leib Shamash of Berlin, scribe
Scenes from the life of Moses in a Haggadah
Hamburg, 1731
The New York Public Library
Dorot Jewish Division

Fedor Grigorévich Solntsev, artist
F. Dreher, lithographer
“Barel’ef, izvestnyi pod imenem obraza Sv. Georgiia” (Bas-relief known as the icon of Saint George) in *Drevnosti Rossiiskago Gosudarstva* (Antiquities of the Russian State)
Moscow: Tip. A. Semena, 1849–53
The New York Public Library
Rare Book Division
pages 94–95

Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo
Picturesque Ideas of the Flight into Egypt
Etching, 1750–53
The New York Public Library
Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection
pages 72–75

Firdausi Tūsi, Abū al-Qāsim Hasan, author
Sharif Amidi, translator
Darvish ‘Abdi, scribe
Iskandar and Khizr (on a mule), both holding shining globes that light their way through the gloom, ride toward the Fountain of Life in *Tarjumah-i Shāhnāmah* (Book of Kings)
10th century, copied in Istanbul 1616–20
The New York Public Library
Spencer Collection
pages 92–93

View of Jerusalem in *Viaggio da Venetia a Constantinopoli* (Journey from Venice to Constantinople)
Venice: Stefano Scolari, ca. 1650
The New York Public Library
Rare Book Division

Charles W. Wilson, editor
“Abraham Oaks, Hebron” in *Picturesque Palestine, Sinai and Egypt*
London: J.S. Virtue and Co., Ltd., 1880–84
The New York Public Library
Arents Collection

Charles W. Wilson, editor
“The Crescent and the Cross” in *Picturesque Palestine, Sinai and Egypt*
New York: D. Appleton, 1881–84
The New York Public Library
General Research Division

Charles W. Wilson, editor
“The School of the Prophets Grotto” in *Picturesque Palestine, Sinai and Egypt*
London: J. S. Virtue and Co., Ltd., 1880–84
The New York Public Library
Arents Collection

Charles W. Wilson, editor
“The ‘Virgin’s Tree’” in *Picturesque Palestine, Sinai and Egypt*
London: J. S. Virtue and Co., Ltd., 1880–84
The New York Public Library
Arents Collection
page 68

Zamakshari
Al-Kashshaf an Haqa’iq an al-Tanzil (The Discoverer of the Truth about the Revelation), vol. 3
Syria or Egypt, 15th century
The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division
page 62

Mustafa al-Za’ir
A Jewish leader holds up the gown of the Jewish prophet Yahyā (John the Baptist) in *Siyar-I Nābi* (Life of the Prophet)
Istanbul, 14th century, copied 1594–95
The New York Public Library
Spencer Collection
pages 88–89

The Morgan Library & Museum

Morgan Picture Bible
Paris, ca. 1250
Old Testament Miniatures with Latin, Persian, and Judeo-Persian inscriptions
The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, MS M. 638, Purchased by J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1916
pages 102, 106, 108–10, and 114–19

The James Gallery at The Graduate Center of The City University of New York

Abraham’s Oak
Hebron, West Bank, 1920s
Postcard with ink on cardboard
Private collection

Abraham’s Oak
Hebron, West Bank, 2010s
Postcard with ink on cardboard
Private collection

Thomas Allom
Monastery of Saint George on Prinkipo
Büyükkada, Turkey, 1838
Constantinople and the Scenery of Seven Churches SABS-Arents Collection, The New York Public Library, New York
page 165

Amulets
Büyükkada, Turkey, 2017
Various materials
Private collection

Felix Bonfils
Abraham’s Oak at Hebron, Palestine
Hebron, West Bank, ca. 1870–85
Photograph
Private collection

Bottle of holy water
Ephesus, Turkey, 2017
Plastic, paper, and water
Private collection

Bottles of holy water
Jerusalem, 2015
Nazareth, Israel, 2015
Nazareth, Israel, 2015
Thessaloniki, Greece, 2016
Plastic, paper, and water
Private collection

Braid of votive threads and

Manoël Pénicaud
Wishing Ball I, II, III
Marseille, France, 2017
Various materials
Private collection

Manoël Pénicaud
Wishing Wall at the House of Mary
Ephesus, Turkey, 2010
Photograph
Private collection
page 177

Manoël Pénicaud
Woman and Votive Eggs in the Crypt of the Ghriba Synagogue
Djerba, Tunisia, 2014
Photograph
Private collection
page 154

Pilgrimage souvenirs from
Bethlehem
Bethlehem, 2015
Various materials
Private collection

The Pilgrims
Marseille, France, 2015
Sound, 3 min., 20 sec.
Editing: Kylian Mercier, Rémi Bernard, and Manon Médina
Sounds collected during fieldwork by Manoël Pénicaud (2007–2014)
Sound supervision: Sébastien Crueghe, Label 42 Studio
Sound creation realized through an educational partnership between the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations (Mucem) in Marseille, France, and Aix-Marseille University (SATIS, ASTRAM), France

The Pilgrims
Marseille, France, 2015
Film, 3 min., 20 sec.
Animation Designer: Gildas Sergé, L'Œil Graphique
Production: Mucem, Marseille, France, 2015

Postcard
Bethlehem, 2016
Postcard with ink on cardboard
Private collection

Prayer of “Our Lady of Ephesus”
Ephesus, Turkey, 1950s
Ink on paper
Private collection

Prayer of “Our Lady Who Brings Down the Walls”
Bethlehem, 2016
Ink on paper
Private collection

Guy Raivitz
Alight by Visitors, Remembrance
Candles Burn outside of Elijah’s Cave
Haifa, Israel, 2017
Photograph
Courtesy the artist
page 27

Guy Raivitz
Both Men and Women Pray inside Elijah’s Cave
Haifa, Israel, 2017
Photograph
Courtesy the artist
page 134

Guy Raivitz
The Entrance to Elijah’s Cave
Haifa, Israel, 2017
Photograph
Courtesy the artist

Guy Raivitz
Pilgrims Crawling under the Icon of the Theotokos at the Tomb of Mary
Jerusalem, 2008
Photograph
Courtesy the artist

Guy Raivitz
Pilgrims Watch the Ceremony inside the Church of the Tomb of Mary
Jerusalem, 2008
Photograph
Courtesy the artist

“Relics” of the Mamre Oak
Hebron, West Bank, 21st century
Wood
Private collection

Anna Marie Rockwell
Wish Tree
New York, 2018
Various materials
Private collection
pages 144–47

Francesco Tuccio
Cross
Lampedusa, Italy, 2017
Wood
Private collection

Francesco Tuccio
Madonna di Porto Salvo
Lampedusa, Italy, 2017
Wood
Private collection

Unknown photographer
The Cave of the Patriarchs
Hebron, West Bank, ca. 1890
Photograph
Private collection

View of Bethlehem
Bethlehem, 1920s
Postcard with ink on cardboard
Private collection

Wishing puppets
Büyükada, Turkey, 2017
Various materials
Private collection

Written wishes
Büyükada, Turkey, 2017
Ink on paper
Private collection

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There could be no better illustration of coexistence than the extensive history of religious sites shared by members of different beliefs and backgrounds. Chronicles of the three Abrahamic religions are full of examples of cohabitation, hospitality, and tolerance despite a world torn apart by cultural, ethnic, and spiritual struggles. Maps of the Mediterranean and Near East are strewn with shrines that have long been the sites of convergence for prayers, wishes, and contemplation... Our contemporary world contains numerous cases of such crossings, many of which are documented in this catalogue.