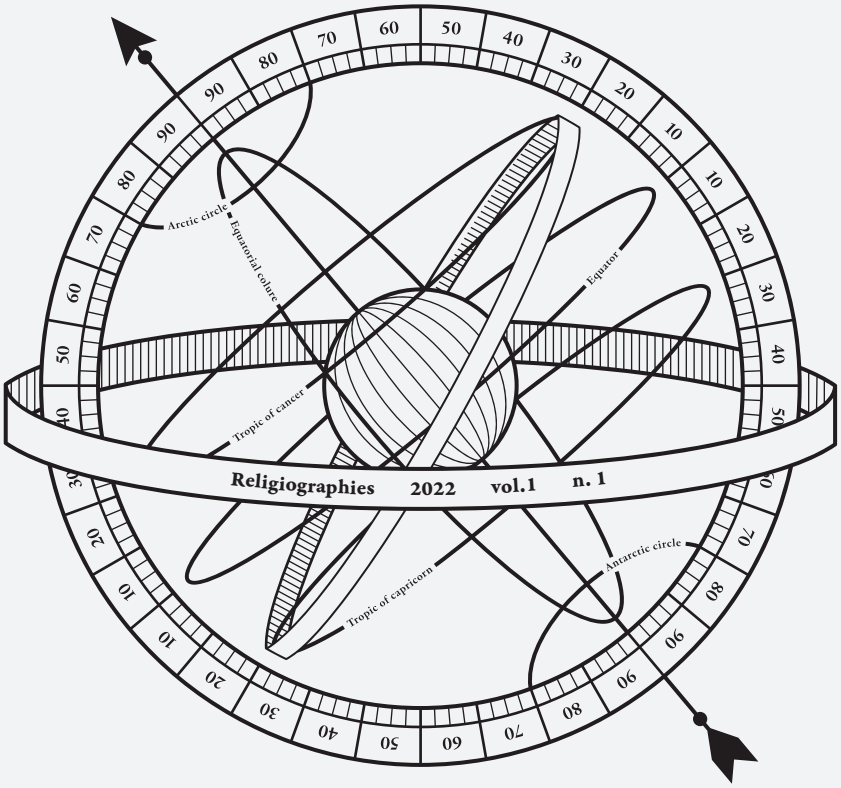
Religiographies



Special Issue
"Holy Sites in the Mediterranean, Sharing and Division"
edited by
Dionigi Albera, Sara Kuehn and Manoël Pénicaud

Fondazione Giorgio Cini 2022 - vol.1 n.1 ISSN 2974-6469

Introduction:

Religious Sharing, Mixing, and Crossing in the Wider Mediterranean

Dionigi Albera, Sara Kuehn and Manoël Pénicaud

Centro Studi di Civiltà e Spiritualità Comparate
fondazione Giorgio Cini onlus

Dionigi Albera
CNRS, Idemec, Aix-Marseille University
dionigi.albera@univ-amu.fr

Sara Kuehn
Department of Islamic Theological Studies, University of Vienna
sara.kuehn@univie.ac.at

Manoël Pénicaud
CNRS, Idemec, Aix-Marseille University
manoelpenicaud@gmail.com

To cite this:
Dionigi Albera, Sara Kuehn and Manoël Pénicaud, 2022, "Introduction: Religious Sharing, Mixing, and Crossing in the Wider Mediterranean," *Religiographies*, vol.1, n.1, pp. 14-21

In recent years, numerous authors have studied the joint attendance of shrines by worshippers of different religions or denominations in the Mediterranean region. This topic has become a kind of research sub-field that has produced a multitude of publications, collective research programmes, conferences and seminars. It has also been covered in media other than classical academic production, through exhibitions, films and websites.[1] This first issue of *Religiographies. Representations, Texts and Lives* intends to contribute to this rapidly growing field.

A distinguished ancestor can be identified in the genealogy of this area of research, Frederick William Hasluck, who in the second decade of the 20th century undertook extensive and wide-ranging investigations on the relations between Christians and Muslims in the Ottoman Empire.[2] In these investigations, he assiduously gathered an impressive array of historical information, which he combined with his own observations and information gathered from a network of correspondents. Hasluck was interested in the management of shrines and their transfer from one religion to another. This also led him to study the forms of popular devotion involving a place belonging to a different religion. On this subject, too, he collected extensive documentation.

During this period, Hasluck was affiliated with the British School of Archaeology in Athens. His research was unfortunately hindered by the outbreak of World War I and then by lung disease diagnosed in 1916, which led to his death in 1920 at the age of only 42. His wife, Margaret Hasluck, revised and collected her husband's scattered notes and articles, and finally, through patient editorial work, reorganised them into a book entitled *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, published in 1929. This work documents a wide range of interfaith frequentation of sacred sites, leading Hasluck to remark that, in those days, visiting shrines of another religion was a common phenomenon.[3] He argued that "practically any of the religions of Turkey may share the use of a sanctuary administered by another, if this sanctuary has a sufficient reputation for beneficent miracles, among which miracles of healing play a predominant part."[4]

Christianity and Islam under the Sultans secured a lasting intellectual influence for Hasluck. However, for a long time, the work on the cross-attendance of shrines found only few emulators. It is only in recent decades that an interest in this subject has coagulated, situating itself explicitly in Hasluck's legacy. Some collective volumes have been instrumental in fostering this perspective.[5] It is clearly impossible here to give an overview of and discuss the numerous works that have been published on this topic in recent years. We will therefore limit ourselves to recalling a few points that seem important for a better definition of this field of study.

Interdisciplinarity

Scholars from various disciplines have become interested in the study of shared sacred spaces. An important line of research has been anthropologically oriented work. Many anthropologists have documented the existence of shrines in the Mediterranean today, frequented by worshippers of multiple religions. They have done this mainly through direct observation and participation in visits and pilgrimages. This ethnographic method has also been adopted by scholars from disciplines such as sociology and political science.

Overall, these studies have shown that the decline in forms of sharing since Hasluck's time has not been as sharp as one might expect, taking into

1
See, for example, www.sharedsacredsites.net. The exhibitions include *Shared Sacred Sites* (*Lieux saints partagés*), first shown in 2015 at the *Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations* (Mucem) in Marseille. These exhibitions were followed by several other versions (see below).

2
On this scholar, see *Archaeology, Anthropology and Heritage in the Balkans and Anatolia: The Life and Times of F.W. Hasluck*, ed. David Shankland (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2004–2013), 3 vols.

3
Frederick William Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam Under the Sultans*, ed. Margaret Hasluck (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2000 [first edition: New York: Clarendon Press, 1929], 2 vols., 65–6.

4
Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam Under the Sultans*, 68–9.

5
Sharing Sacred Spaces in the Mediterranean. Christians, Muslims, and Jews at Shrines and Sanctuaries, eds. Dionigi Albera and Maria Couroucli (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012); *Sharing the Sacra. The Politics and Pragmatics of Intercommunal Relations around Holy Places*, ed. Glenn Bowman (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012); *Partage du sacré. Transferts, dévotions mixtes, rivalités interconfessionnelles*, eds. Isabelle Dépret and Guillaume Dye (Bruxelles: E.M.E., 2012); *Muslims and Others in Sacred Space*, ed. Margaret Cormack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); *Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites. Religion and Conflict Resolution*, eds. Elazar Barkan and Karen Barkey (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); *Lieux saint partagés*, eds. Dionigi Albera, Manoël Pénicaud and Isabelle Marquette (Arles: Actes Suds-Mucem, 2015); Robert Hayden *et al.*, *Antagonistic Tolerance: Competitive Sharing of Religious Sites and Spaces* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016); *Pilgrimages and Ambiguity: Sharing the Sacred*, eds. Thierry Zarcone and Angela Hobart (London: Kingston Publishing, 2017); *Shared Sacred Sites*, eds. Dionigi Albera, Karen Barkey and Manoël Pénicaud (New York: New York Public Library, City University of New York, Morgan Library and Museum, 2018); "The Changing Landscapes of Cross-Faith Places and Practices," ed. Manfred Sing (special issue of *Entangled Religions* 9, 2019: 1–272, http://doi.org/10.13154/er.v9.2019);

account the socio-economic and political transformations experienced by the southern and eastern sectors of the Mediterranean, where religious sharing was most pronounced in the past. Certainly, the development of ethnoreligious nationalism—generating a succession of wars, population exchanges (*e.g.*, between Greece and Turkey), deportations, and border demarcations—along with urbanisation processes, have profoundly altered the religious landscape of these countries. There is also the impact of political Islam, the growing influence of Salafist currents, not to mention terrorism. But even in this profoundly transformed context, forms of religious interchange continue to exist, sometimes discreetly, sometimes with the participation of substantial numbers of the faithful.

Another important line of research is oriented toward the past. Some anthropologists have given an historical dimension to their research. Above all, there are quite a few historians who have focused on this topic in relation to different periods, from the Middle Ages to the modern age. They have made use of a variety of sources and often adopted a micro-historical approach. What emerges clearly from this body of research is the proliferation of religious sharing, which is an element of strong continuity over the centuries. Even though these two lines of research have often proceeded separately, it should be remarked that there has been considerable mutual acquaintance, as evidenced by the numerous cross-references between books and articles. The task now is to strengthen this cross-fertilisation by emphasising and making more explicit the interdisciplinarity of this field of studies.[6]

Comparison

A comparative approach has proved crucial in establishing a field of studies on shared sacred spaces. Only in this way, by establishing comparative grids, was it possible to extract a general perspective going beyond the local character of many of these phenomena. In short, through their serial arrangement, the dispersed forms of interfaith sharing no longer appeared as small idiosyncrasies or oddities, but as manifestations of far more general trends.

The Mediterranean has probably been the most suitable area for such a comparative exercise. This is amply justified by the geographical and historical characteristics of this emblematic region. Here, the presence of the monotheistic religions was particularly precocious and compact, generating a strong tendency towards exclusivism and purism. At the same time, peoples with different religions have lived in close contact over millennia, leading to frequent influences, borrowings and interactions. It is this paradoxical mixture that gives this region its particular form. This does not mean, however, that there are no other significant comparative horizons, involving for example smaller parts of the Mediterranean region, such as the Balkans.[7]

Similar phenomena certainly are present in other parts of the world and have been the subject of various studies that have documented them well—even if these works have perhaps been less visible, since they are more dispersed and less specialised than the research on shared shrines in the Mediterranean. Extending the comparison, for example to the Indian subcontinent, for which there is an established research tradition on this topic,[8] could allow us to better understand the similarities and differences with respect to the situations observed in the Mediterranean. A more comprehensive comparison[9] could also allow us to reach a more general

"Shared Sacred Space in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean," edited by Jessica Tearney-Pearce and Jan Vandeburie, special issue of *Al-Masāq* 34, no. 2 (2022).

6

See the interesting recent discussion by Benjamin Kedar, "Studying the 'Shared Sacred Spaces' of the Medieval Levant: Where Historians May Meet Anthropologists," *Al-Masāq* 34, no. 2 (2022), https://doi.org/10.1080/09503110.2021.2015934. A useful review of anthropological and historical works is presented in Jessica Tearney-Pearce and Jan Vandeburie, "Sharing Sacred Space in the Medieval Mediterranean: Introduction," *Al-Masāq* 34, no. 2 (2022): 103–10, https://doi.org/10.1080/09503110.2022.2094584.

7

Religion and Boundaries. Studies from the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Turkey, ed. Galia Valtchinova (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2010); Evelyn Reuter, *Die Mehrdeutigkeit geteilter religiöser Orte: Eine ethnographische Fallstudie zum Kloster Sveti Naum in Ohrid (Mazedonien)* (Bielefeld: transcript-Verlag, 2021).

8

See, for example, Jackie Assayag, *Au confluent de deux rivières. Musulmans et hindous dans le sud de l'Inde*, (Paris: Presses de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient 1995); *Altérité et identité. Islam et christianisme en Inde* eds. Jackie Assayag and Gilles Tarabout (Paris: Éditions de l'EHESS, 1997); Rohan Bastin, *The Domain of Constant Excess: Plural Worship at the Munnesvaram Temple in Sri Lanka* (New York: Berghahn, 2002); Anna Bigelow, *Sharing the Sacred. Practicing Pluralism in Muslim North India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Michel Boivin, "Le pèlerinage de Sehwân Sharif, Sindh (Pakistan): territoires, protagonistes et rituels," in *Les pèlerinages au Moyen-Orient: espaces publics, espaces du public*, eds. Sylvia Chiffoleau and Anna Madoeuf (Institut Français du Proche-Orient: Damas, 2005), 311–45; *Inter-religious Practices and Saint Veneration in the Muslim World. Khidr/Khizr from the Middle East to South Asia*, eds. Michel Boivin and Manoël Pénicaud (London and New York: Routledge, 2023); David Mosse, "Catholic Saints and the Hindu Village Pantheon in Rural Tamil Nadu, India," *Man*, NS 29, no. 2 (1994): 301–32, https://doi.org/10.2307/2804476; Brigitte Sebastia, *Les rondes de Saint Antoine. Culte, affliction et possession en Inde du Sud* (Montreuil: Aux lieux d'être, 2007); Yoginder Sikand, *Sacred Spaces: Exploring Traditions of Shared Faith in India* (New Delhi: Penguin India, 2003); Paul Younger, "Velankanni Calling: Hindu Patterns of Pilgrimage at a Christian Shrine," in *Sacred Journeys. The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, ed. Allan Morinis (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1992), 89–99.

9

For some attempts in this direction, see *Sharing the Sacra*, ed. Bowman; *Muslims and Others in Sacred Space*, ed. Cormack; *Pilgrimages and Ambiguity*, eds. Zarcone and Hobart. See also Dionigi Albera, "La mixité religieuse dans les pèlerinages. Esquisse d'une analyse comparative," *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 155 (2011): 109–29, https://doi.org/10.4000/assr.23323.

understanding of these phenomena, including the construction and preservation of religious identity, its coherence, and the compactness of religious groups.

Concepts

As we have remarked, the birth of this new field has been facilitated by the compilation of a series of studies under the banner of "sharing," in a series of books and other initiatives that have had an impact outside the academic world. However, the use of this category also poses some problems. In several cases, scholars adopt the term "sharing" somewhat reluctantly, for lack of a better term, in the awareness that if this label works to delimit a field of study, it suffers from a certain inaccuracy from an analytical point of view. The idea of sharing risks over-emphasising the commonalities and peaceful understanding between the faithful of the different religions involved in this phenomenon. It may also obscure the divisions, disagreements, and conflicts that often accompany the sociology of these frontier spaces.[10] The term "sharing" can be applied to a wide range of aspects: the sacred space, its control by religious groups, the practices that are carried out there, and the beliefs that accompany them. In short, this term is endowed with a wealth of references; this is also the reason for its relative inaccuracy. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that this category is certainly not the only one with flaws. Almost every concept that has been devised to describe phenomena of interreligious convergence and superimposition is exposed to some sort of criticism. Take, for example, the term "syncretism": it certainly has a long history behind it, but is fraught with possible misunderstandings, which are particularly evident in cases of joint attendance of sanctuaries. In many instances, especially in the Mediterranean, interreligious frequentations do not in fact generate a new syncretic synthesis; instead, we are generally witnessing a simple juxtaposition of ritual or religious registers, without any form of fusion.

In turn, the notion of "tolerance," with its strong philosophical imprint, often appears far removed from the concrete forms of interreligious cohabitation in sanctuaries. Not even the idea of "hybridisation" seems to be a possible panacea, when one considers its roots in a biological discourse. And terms like "métissage" and "creolisation," with their Caribbean echoes, are perhaps too loose a dress for the phenomena that interest us here.

For better or worse, the term "sharing," with all its imperfections, is probably destined to remain with us. However, it is important to underpin it with an analytical vocabulary that allows us to better discern and describe the phenomena subsumed under this label. It must be added that there is by no means a lack of explorations in this sense, offering a vast conceptual pool. We will limit ourselves here to a few examples. For medieval times, Benjamin Kedar has proposed a typology of shared cults based on three types of convergence: only in the space, in-egalitarian, and egalitarian.[11] On the anthropological side, Robert Hayden, in an oft-cited article published some twenty years ago, coined two suggestive categories: "antagonist tolerance" and "competitive sharing."[12] These oxymorons lend themselves to capturing the complex and contradictory configurations of shared sanctuaries.[13] The term "mixed" seems to be more neutral than "shared," and indeed has been used as an alternative to designate situations where people of more than one religion attend the same shrine.[14] Some authors have suggested that its use may be seen as a possible solution to

10
In some ways, the French term "partage" has a wider spectrum of meanings than its English counterpart, as it can also express the idea of division, even though the sense of sharing and participation prevails.

11
Benjamin Z. Kedar, "Convergences of Oriental Christian, Muslim, and Frankish Worshippers: The Case of Saydnaya," in *De Sion exibit lex et verbum domini de Hierusalem: Essays on Medieval Law, Liturgy and Literature in Honour of Amnon Linder*, ed. Yitzhak Hen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 59–69. These perspectives have been further elaborated by 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*, eds. Iris Shagrir, Ronnie Ellenblum and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 219–32. Recently, Benjamin Kedar has further refined this typology, see "Studying the 'Shared Sacred Spaces' of the Medieval Levant."

12
Robert Hayden, "Antagonistic Tolerance: Competitive Sharing of Religions Sites in South Asia and Balkans," *Current Anthropology* 43:2 (2002): 205-31, https://doi.org/10.1086/338303. However, in the excellent studies that Hayden and his collaborators produced in the following years, they seemed to favour above all the political and spatial dimensions, as well as the component of antagonism and competition. See, for example, Robert Hayden *et al.*, "The Byzantine Mosque at Trilye: A Processual Analysis of Dominance, Sharing, Transformation and Tolerance," *History & Anthropology* 22, no. 1 (2011): 1–17, https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2011.546851; Robert Hayden and Timothy Walker, "Intersecting Religioscapes: A Comparative Approach to Trajectories of Change, Scale, and Competitive Sharing of Religious Spaces," *Journal of American Academy of Religion* 81, no. 2 (2013): 399–426, https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lft009; Hayden *et al.*, *Antagonistic Tolerance.*

13
Rohan Bastin, *The Domain of Constant Excess*; op. cit; Ron E. Hassner, " 'To Halve and to Hold': Conflicts over Sacred Space and the Problem of Indivisibility," *Security Studies* 12, no. 4 (2003): 1–33, https://doi.org/10.1080/09636410390447617; Yitzhak Reiter, *Contested Holy Places in Israel–Palestine: Sharing and Conflict Resolution* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017).

14
See Dionigi Albera, "Pèlerinages mixtes et sanctuaires 'ambigus' en Méditerranée," in *Les pèlerinages au Maghreb et au Moyen-Orient*, eds. Sylvia Chiffoleau and Anna Madœuf (Beirut: Presses de l'Ifpo, 2005), 347–78; idem, "La mixité religieuse dans les pèlerinages. Esquisse d'une analyse comparative," *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 155 (2011): 109–29, https://doi.org/10.4000/assr.23323.

some of the terminological dilemmas just mentioned.[15] In his seminal studies, Frederick Hasluck used the category of "ambiguity" to describe shrines attended by multiple religions. Dionigi Albera has more recently sought to broaden the scope of this notion to encompass a wider set of phenomena of religious sharing.[16] Furthermore, Albera has applied the idea of "polytropy" to the Mediterranean region, borrowing it from the anthropologist Michael Carrithers, who coined this concept from the Greek *poly* (many) and *tropos* (turns) to express the eclecticism of religious life in South Asia, where people may turn to many sources for their spiritual life without dwelling inside the borders of one religious group.[17]

Also worth mentioning is the inspiring work by Jens Kreinath on the concept of "interrituality." Based on his observation of pilgrimage centres in Turkey, this author proposes this notion as a tool that refers to all kinds of ritual relations in shared pilgrimages.[18] This conceptualisation is in line with the idea highlighted by Dionigi Albera and Manoël Pénicaud that religiosity and "interreligiosity" are broader, stronger, and more dynamic than normative and established religions. In other words, interfaith sharing often takes place at the margins and/or in the interstices of the sacred.[19] In line with this conceptual reflection, Dionigi Albera has developed a new analytical distinction between "hetero-rituality" and "poly-rituality" in a recent work.[20] On the one hand, the process of hetero-rituality, characterised above all by a silent and spontaneous cohabitation of ritual practices, concerns the borrowing and sharing described in this thematic issue. Most of the time, this rituality is considered heterodox and often condemned by the religious orthodoxies. On the other hand, poly-rituality is characterised by official events, speeches, and gestures that show tolerance and mutual acceptance. This phenomenon occurs in the frame of contemporary interreligious dialogue. Numerous recent studies have focused on this new kind of religious space, intentionally created, organised and staged to promote so-called "living together" between the faithful of different religions. Among examples of new shared places of worship,[21] let us mention the "House of One" under construction in Berlin, or interreligious pilgrimages, like the Christian-Muslim pilgrimage of the Seven Sleepers, founded in Brittany in the 1950s.[22]

Cultural Crossings

The sharing of sacred places—to stay with this category, probably still useful if a little imprecise—is certainly not an isolated phenomenon. It cannot be seen as a flower blooming in the desert. On the contrary, it is embedded in a propitious landscape, in a much broader web of relations connecting different and often antagonist cultures and religions. There are therefore obvious bridges to scholars who are interested in these broader cultural crossings in the Mediterranean region.[23] Some areas of research appear strictly contiguous. This is the case, for example, of works exploring the sharing of theological contents between religions,[24] or forms of interreligious coexistence at the local level,[25] or transfer of religious buildings from one religion to another.[26] As for the study of the circulation and adaptation of artistic or cultural motifs, it is incontestably relevant.[27] The issue of conversion also has particular significance, and the studies devoted to renegades and "amphibious" personalities are particularly fascinating, as these personalities develop between multiple religious identities.[28]

The topic of shared sacred shrines, moreover, may stimulate a

15
Glenn Bowman, "Orthodox-Muslim Interactions at 'Mixed Shrines' in Macedonia," in *Eastern Christians in Anthropological Perspective*, eds. Chris Hann and Hermann Goltz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 195–219; Robert M. Hayden, "Shared Space, or Mixed?" in *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Space*, ed. Jeanne Halgren Kilde (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 71–84.

16
Dionigi Albera, "Toward a Reappraisal of Ambiguity: In the Footsteps of Frederick W. Hasluck," in *Pilgrimages and Ambiguity: Sharing the Sacred*, eds Thierry Zarcone and Angela Hobart (London: Kingston Publishing, 2017), 23–43.

17
Michael Carrithers, "On Polytropy: Or the Natural Condition of Spiritual Cosmopolitanism in India: The Digambar Jain Case," *Modern Asian Studies* 34, no. 4 (2000): 831–61, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X00003991; Dionigi Albera, "Digressions on Polytropy: An Exploration of Religious Eclecticism in Eurasia," *Entangled Religions* 9, no. 5 (2019): 139–64, https://doi.org/10.13154/er.v9.2019.139-164.

18
Jens Kreinath, "Interrituality as a New Approach for Studying Interreligious Relations and Ritual Dynamics at Shared Pilgrimage Sites in Hatay, Turkey," *Interreligious Studies and Intercultural Theology* 1, no. 2 (2017): 257–84, https://doi.org/10.1558/isit.33742.

19
Dionigi Albera and Manoël Pénicaud, "Coexistences, Interférences, Interstices," in *Coexistences. Lieux saints partagés en Europe et en Méditerranée*, eds. Dionigi Albera and Manoël Pénicaud (Arles: Actes Sud-MNHI, 2017), 16–23.

20
Dionigi Albera, "Ritual Mixing and Inter-rituality at Marian shrines," in *Crossing Ritual Borders: Opportunities, Limits, and Obstacles*, ed. Marianne Moyaert (New York: Palgrave, 2019), 137–54.

21
See, for instance, *Geographies of Encounter: The Making and Unmaking of Multi-Religious Spaces*, ed. Marian Burchardt and Maria Chiara Giorda (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021); *Houses of Religions: Visions, Formats and Experiences*, ed. Martin Rötting (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2021).

22
Marian Burchardt, "Multi-Religious Places by Design: Space, Materiality, and Media in Berlin's House of One," in Geographies of Encounter, 231-252; Manoël Pénicaud, *Le réveil des Sept Dormants. Un pèlerinage islamo-chrétien en Bretagne* (Paris: Cerf, 2016).

23
For an overview of this enormous field of research, see, for example, Eric R. Dursteler, "On Bazaars and Battlefields: Recent Scholarship on Mediterranean Cultural Contacts," *Journal of Early Modern History* 15 (2011): 413-34, https://doi.org/10.1163/157006511X590730; Molly Greene, "The Mediterranean Sea," in *Oceanic Histories*, eds.

David Armitage, Alison Bashford and Sujit Sivasundaram (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 134–55.

24 For recent publications in this vast field, see *Abraham's Family: A Network of Meaning in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. Lukas Bormann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018); *Interpreting Scriptures in Judaism, Christianity and Islam: Overlapping Inquiries*, eds. Mordechai Z. Cohen and Adele Berlin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); *Minorities in Contact in the Medieval Mediterranean*, eds. Clara Almagro Vidal, Jessica Tearney-Pearce and Luke Yarbrough (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020).

25 Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); *Christians, Muslims and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Interaction and Cultural Change*, eds. Mark D. Meyerson and Edward D. English (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000); Eric Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

26 *The Conversion of Spaces and Places of Worship in Anatolia: International Conference 10-11 April 2021,* eds. Vanessa R. de Obaldía und Doğan Bermek (Istanbul: Milli Basimnve Yayin, 2021). Several contributions of Elizabeth Key Fowden are relevant. See for example "The Parthenon Mosque, King Solomon and the Greek Sages," in *Ottoman Athens: Archeology, Topography, History*, eds. Maria Georgopoulou and Konstantinos Thanasakis (Athens: The Gennadius Library and Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation, 2019), 67–95; idem, "Shrines and Banners: Paleo-Muslims and their Material Inheritance," in *Encompassing the Sacred in Islamic Art and Architecture*, eds. Lorenz Korn and Çiğdem İvren (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2020), 5–23.

27 Pamela Berger, "Jewish-Muslim Veneration at Pilgrimage Places in the Holy Land," *Religion and the Arts* 15 (2011): 1-60, https://doi.org/10.1163/156852911X547466; Alexandra Cuffel, "'Henceforward All Generations Will Call Me Blessed': Medieval Christian Tales of Non-Christian Marian Veneration", *Mediterranean Studies* 12 (2003): 37–60; Finbarr Barry Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval 'Hindu-Muslim' Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018); Sara Kuehn, *The Dragon in Medieval East Christian and Islamic Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

28 Bartolomé Bennassar and Lucile Bennassar, *Les chrétiens d'Allah: l'histoire extraordinaire des renégats, XVIe-XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Perrin, 1989); Lucetta Scaraffia, *Rinnegati: Per una storia dell'identità occidentale* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1993); Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiggers, *A Man of Three Worlds: Samuel Pallache, a Moroccan Jew in Catholic and Protestant Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth Century Muslim Between Worlds* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006); Eric Dursteler, *Renegade Women; Gender, Identity*

conversation with works on seemingly more distant topics, such as those that have highlighted the complexity of trade networks,[29] the role of intermediaries and the diffusion of a lingua franca.[30] Overall, multiple forms of interaction and exchange emerge and the borders within the Mediterranean region sometimes dissolve into spaces of transition.

Holy Sites in the Mediterranean: Sharing and Division

This special issue has its initial roots in an international conference at the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations (Mucem) in Marseille on 3–5 June 2015. This event, organised by the Mucem, Idemec (Institute of Mediterranean European and Comparative Ethnology), and IMéRA (Institute of Advanced Studies, Aix-Marseille University), took place in parallel with the *Shared Sacred Sites* exhibition (*Lieux saints partagés*) (29 April–31 August 2015) curated by Dionigi Albera, Manoël Pénicaud and Isabelle Marquette.[31] The conference provided an opportunity to take stock of current research in this field, which was rapidly expanding on an international level. And since then, the conference papers that are presented in the first part of this issue have been significantly revised and enriched.

The authors aim to contribute to the ongoing conversation on the formation, adaptation, and negotiation of shared and contested sacred places and devotional practices and to provide a more nuanced picture of the multiplicity of interfaith crossings and their historical transformations. For this purpose, this special first issue of *Religiographies* brings together articles that approach the subject from different angles and disciplinary backgrounds combining (art) history/archaeology, Islamic Studies and anthropology. Paying attention to the wider cultural interminglings, this interdisciplinary perspective opens up new theoretical considerations and points to new research directions on multi-faith sacred centres.

Part I of *Holy Sites in the Mediterranean: Sharing and Division* consists of six chronologically arranged contributions that highlight different synchronic and diachronic approaches to religious sharing, mixing, and crossing in the wider Mediterranean. It opens with two articles investigating the religious crossings of Christian and early Muslim sacred sites. Both illustrate the epistemological problems of using written documents as well as preserved monuments, material remains and archaeological sites. In "Material Looting, New Buildings, and Textual Strategies: Christians and Early Muslims in Lydda and Jerusalem," Mattia Guidetti (University of Bologna) alerts us to the contradictory modalities of early Muslims approaches to the Christian sacred and symbolic landscape. Using the sanctuary of Saint George in Lydda and the Christian complex of buildings east of the Jerusalem city walls as case studies, Guidetti shows that while Muslims continued to pay homage to the great Christian shrines that had attracted pilgrims since late antiquity, they also began to create a new hierarchy in the sacred landscape, a new order with separate Muslim sites as the main attraction. The article that follows, by Susana Calvo Capilla (Complutense University, Madrid), "Early Religious Architecture in al-Andalus and its Islamic Context: Some Reflections," shifts the focus from the Syro-Palestinian region to al-Andalus. Calvo Capilla examines the sparse and ambiguous written sources, surviving monuments, and material remains to gain astounding insights into the religious spaces of the first Islamised communities in the wake of the Arabisation and the Islamisation in the Iberian Peninsula. Her findings

led her to the hypothesis that because neither doctrine nor liturgy were clearly defined, there were not yet any sacred spaces that would make them recognisable as such today. It was not until the "(re)construction" of the mosques in the capitals of Damascus, Jerusalem, Medina and Cairo during the time of the sixth Umayyad caliph al-Walīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 705–715) in the first two decades of the 8th century that a permanent model of a place of worship emerged.

The third and fourth articles are related to the broader study of cultural transfers and of circulations of religious beliefs and devotional practices, which are interwoven with the theme of shared sacred centres. The article by Thierry Zarcone (GSRL, CNRS, Paris), "The Seven Sleepers between Christianity and Islam: From Portraits to Talismans," elucidates the unique role played in Islamic saint veneration by the "Companions of the Cave" (*Aṣḥāb al-Kahf*), known in Christianity as the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. Zarcone's study provides telling insight into the Christian and Muslim traditions of depicting images of these saints which take on a prophylactic quality and become talismans. Interestingly, the main difference between Christian and Muslim veneration of the Seven Sleepers and their (talismanic) representation is embodied by the dog Qitmīr who, in the Islamic (but not in the Christian) tradition, occupies a key position. In "Mixed Worship: The Double Cult of Sarı Saltuk and St. Nicholas in the Balkans," Sara Kuehn (University of Vienna) next shifts the focus to the process of cultural intermingling, acts of translating, and mixed worship of two "saints," Saltuk and Nicholas. In five case studies of religio-cultural "accommodation," Kuehn explores the "interactions" and attendant double identity of the two saints from the perspective of mixed places of worship and the interminglings between the Christians and Muslim worlds taking place within these sites in the *longue durée*.

The last two contributions propose an anthropological approach based on ethnographic research devoted to contemporary phenomena. In the fift article, "Miracles and Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Lebanon. The Proof is in the Eyes of the Other," Emma Aubin-Boltanski (CéSOR, CNRS, Paris) describes the emergence of a Christian shared shrine after a Muslim child witnessed a miracle of the Virgin Mary in a Maronite church in Lebanon in 2006. In the context of shared rituals and experiences, Aubin-Boltanski also notes a "dialogue" of natural elements (such as water, soil, stones and trees), emphasised by both Christians and Muslims, which acts as a catalyst for interfaith experiences that is crucial for promoting sustainable peace in the region. In the last article, "A Paradoxical Pilgrimage. The Ghriba Synagogue in Djerba (Tunisia)," Dionigi Albera and Manoël Pénicaud (Idemec, CNRS, Aix-Marseille University) explore the local and global mechanism of the Jewish pilgrimage at the Ghriba synagogue, a dynamic sacred site of interreligious intermingling attended in particular by Muslim women. Albera and Pénicaud explore the potential of the concept of "paradox" (from *para-* "contrary to" and *doxa* "opinion"), which bears two meanings, namely "a tenet contrary to received opinion" or "one (such as a person, situation or action) having seemingly contradictory qualities or phases." Both notions encapsulate crucial aspects of the configurations observable in the often contradictory components at work in shared sacred places. In their study of the annual pilgrimage to the Ghriba synagogue, they focus primarily on the second dimension of the idea of paradox. This conceptualisation, the authors stipulate, could serve as a new analytical tool capable in some ways of

and Boundaries in the Early Modern Mediterranea (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

29
Merchants in the Ottoman Empire, eds. Suraiya Faroqhi and Gilles Veinstein (Paris: Peeters, 2008); Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

30
Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Jocelyne Dakhlia, *Lingua franca: histoire d'une langue métisse en Méditerranée* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2008).

31
After the Mucem exhibition, revisited versions of the exhibition were presented at the *Bardo Museum* in Tunis (2016); the *Museum of Photography,* the *Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art* and *Yeni Cami* in Thessaloniki (2017); the *Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration* in Paris (2017–2018); the *Dar El Bacha-Musée des Confluences* in Marrakesh (2017–2018); the *New York Public Library*, the *City University of New York* (James Gallery) and the *Morgan Library and Museum* (2018); the Depo in Istanbul (2019) and CerModern in Ankara (2021); and the École française de Rome (2022-2023). On these exhibitions, see the article "Writing in Three Dimensions: Heterographies of Shared Sacred Sites" by Dionigi Albera and Manoël Pénicaud at the end of this first issue of *Religiographies*.

replacing more traditional tools such as syncretism or métissage, and could prove useful in defining important elements, along with other concepts, such as ambiguity or polytropy.[32]

The second part of this special issue (*Heterographies*) consists of essays that survey a different way of approaching shared holy spaces than the classical academic articles in the first part. This does not mean that the contributions presented there are non-academic, but they explore other ways of writing. As we understand it, the neologism "heterography" refers to all modes of writing—in the broadest sense—that differ from (or are complementary to) traditional text writing.[33] This broad notion can thus correspond to, among other things, visual, acoustic, musical, physical or digital writings. Social scientists increasingly use these alternative modes of "writing" in their own research practices (photos, films, 3D reconstructions, GIS storymaps, exhibitions, etc.). This is by no means an entirely new trend, but it is important to note the multiplication of these forms that render and narrate research and that are generally aimed at a wider audience than purely academic writing. This generates a "neighbourhood" with various contemporary forms of artistic expression, which in turn gravitate toward the approach of the social sciences. On the whole, a new field of collaboration and discussion with artists is opening up. It provides a space for in-depth conversations about artistic creations and innovations that have important humanitarian and/or social impacts.

In "Rachid Koraïchi's Migratory Aesthetics" Sara Kuehn (University of Vienna) provides insight into one of the most important projects of the world-renowned French-Algerian artist, the newly opened "Le Jardin d'Afrique" / "The Garden of Africa" in southern Tunisia, a paradisical garden cemetery created to honour and commemorate the increasing number of refugees and migrants who have drowned crossing the Mediterranean Sea while attempting to reach asylum in Europe. Finally, the article "Writing in Three Dimensions. Heterographies of Shared Sacred Sites," by Dionigi Albera and Manoël Pénicaud (Idemec, CNRS, Aix-Marseille University), comes full circle by describing their dual experience as researchers and curators of the *Lieux saints partagés / Shared Sacred Sites* exhibition, which in its first venue was accompanied by the 2015 conference at the Mucem that helped initiate this thematic issue.

32
On the notion "polytropy," see Dionigi Albera, "Digressions on Polytropy."

33
This consideration on "heterographies" follows the collective work carried out since 2016 at Idemec (CNRS, Aix-Marseille University), as writings of difference and/or differential writings.