

**מקומות
קדושים
משותפים
Shared
Sacred
Sites
المواقع
المقدسة
المشتركة**

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**THE
GRADUATE
CENTER**
CITY UNIVERSITY
OF NEW YORK

The
Morgan
Library &
Museum

EDITED BY
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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

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.

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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*

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.

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, Hadır, 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

Chania

TURKEY

Soğanlı

Afşin

Tarsus

SYRIA

Deir Mar Mûsa

Harissa

Beirut

Damascus

Haifa

Nazareth

ISRAEL

Lod

Hebron

Bethlehem

Cairo

Mount Sinai

EGYPT

Sites Presented
in the Exhibition

Sefrou

Essaouira

Lampedusa

Djerba

Chenini

TUNISIA

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

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 ethnoreligious 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*

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-Khīdr 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



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* 9, 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.

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





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

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 Marioige 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

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 Worshipers: 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 Laszlovsky (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.



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 Zaytūn, 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.

power of

**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 *Shāhnāmāh* (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



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

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MORGAN PICTURE BIBLE

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



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 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

