

Ambiguous Spaces

A Contextualisation of Shared Pilgrimage in Ephesus

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Chapter 1

Introduction: An Enquiry Into Context



It is remarkable what narratives a ritual object can encode. While undertaking this research on the theme of religious hybridity and shared pilgrimage, I made an unusual discovery: After moving into a new small flat recently offered to me for temporary accommodation in Tilburg, the relatively small Dutch town where I had recently joined the team of researchers contributing to the university's Institute of Ritual and Liturgical Studies and Holy Ground project, I discovered that the previous owner had left a small stick of Indian

incense behind, burned most of the way down to the stem. Remembering from an earlier visit to the building that the former occupant was both Indian (Ragavan) and a friend of the Pakistani woman (Amina) further down the corridor, I asked my Pakistani neighbour about him and the incense. To this she replied that, although he was visiting the Netherlands as a business professional, he was a trained Brahman, a 'ritual expert', and as such he performed the daily Brahmanic rites and wore the sacred thread appropriate to a man of his background. In the evenings, rather than waving offerings and incense before the image of Ganesha, the elephant-headed deity alone, he would sometimes allow his Pakistani Muslim friend and neighbour Amina to do this for him or with him. Needless to say, I was more than surprised to find that a hybrid religious practice, essentially small scale 'shared pilgrimage' to a private sanctuary, had been taking place in my own home, before my arrival, considering that I had just begun researching the topic a few months earlier.

Both of the Indian and Pakistani friends were, in a sense, simultaneously representing and going against tradition, as is the case with the Christian-Muslim encounter highlighted in this book. In the case transported from the Subcontinent to my own home, the Hindu was breaking traditional caste purity taboos in the ritual and the Muslim violating officially held norms regarding idolatry. Yet at the same time, there is a strong precedent from both their communities, a pattern that repeats across borders in the context of shared pilgrimage praxis. Both could appeal, in their approach, to the long traditions of anti-caste discrimination activism amongst the thinkers and mystics of Hinduism, or the broad universalism of Islamic mysticism coinciding with its Hindu counterparts. Muslims and Hindus in South Asia have come together to produce a vast universalist spiritual literature such as that of Tulsi Das and Kabir¹ (to name only two of the most famous) and went so far as to construct whole new religious and esoteric traditions such as Sikhism and the Sant Mat movement of 13th Century Northern India.² In the Turkish context of this study, the Bektashi Sufi order

¹ C. VAUDEVILLE: *A Weaver Named Kabir: Selected Verses with a Detailed Biographical and Historical Introduction* (Oxford 1993).

² K. SCHOMER and W.H. MCLEOD: *The Sants: Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India* (Delhi 1987).

often had a similarly universalist and ecumenical role (neglecting for a moment its imperial aspect) in the Ottoman Empire.³

Indeed, both expressed these open and universalist views from their collective discourse repertoires at various times. Yet, only rarely is the lived, grounded religion I will undertake to contextualise here justified with any elaborate theories or creative of entirely new religions. That would belie its pattern as a religiosity of directness, simplicity and practicality. And of course, Indians and Pakistanis, like Canadians, Mexicans or any other group of people, are not bound by their own religious and cultural traditions. New forms evolve and rituals and behaviours develop spontaneously or largely without reference to precedent, particularly less formal rituals. As seen in the Indo-Pakistani example above, shared pilgrimage is far more ubiquitous in many cultures than can even begin to be encompassed by a study of this kind and, indeed, as the example also shows, it is even present in (what is often termed) the West now as well, a fact that cannot be forgotten. Further, as such traditions come closer into view, provocative as they are, cannot be seen through rose coloured glasses. The transition from the Ottoman to post-Ottoman world in the East Mediterranean was not a shared pilgrimage picnic, and neither is the recent history of Muslims and Hindus in South Asia, to bring in the above example. This is all the more reason that a clearer context for these complex phenomena is so necessary.

I endeavour to understand this multi-religious simultaneous acting in sacred space via ethnographic, qualitative fieldwork and an examination of the key issues and parallel examples developing out of experiences in the field. These issues serve to further illuminate the traditional world in which the research question is embedded and from which I draw great inspiration while attempting to simultaneously maintain a mature critique, making it a more integral inspiration that takes into account the ideals presented, along with the inevitable reality that these traditional cultures (Turkish, Balkan,

³ A. MINKOV: *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans: KisveBahası Petitions and Ottoman Social Life, 1670-1730* (Leiden 2004) 104-105 (some Bektashis and others may dispute Minkov's observations as a description of Bektashism, as I have observed in the field, at least amongst Turkish Bektashis).

Middle Eastern, South Asian, North African) like all societies/cultural groups do present a web of contradiction in their discourses and practices around religious tolerance, a reality that many are attempting to come to grips with by studying shared, ambiguous pilgrimage and devotional spaces, as I will shortly detail.

A. Concentric Rings of Context

Considering these factors, this undertaking is oriented towards a backgrounding of shared pilgrimage, from an understanding of the general milieu within which it happens, to the finer details of its practice in the House of the Virgin Mary on the outskirts of the modern day Turkish city of Selçuk, once ancient Ephesus. *The question I seek to answer is how and why shared pilgrimage takes place in locations where people of more than one religious tradition converge on the same place in honour of the same religious figure (albeit differently understood, generally) taking the House of the Virgin Mary with its large Turkish Muslim following as the main example, yet looking at the site within ever widening concentric rings of emplacement.* The House of the Virgin Mary itself is seen in its Turkish and Ottoman context, further contextualised vis-à-vis the widely diffused practice of shared pilgrimage in the Islamic world and the borders of the Islamic heartlands where an Islamicate influence has taken root, as seen in architecture, language, cuisine and custom. Meryem Ana Evi ('Mother Mary's House') then is the most central point in our map, followed by Turkey as a whole (particular mention is made of sites in Konya and Istanbul) the former Ottoman Empire (there are examples from the Arab Middle East and the Balkans) and the Islamic world generally (North Africa, Iran). Further, we draw upon those places where Islam is present as a minority influence but which previously has been a hegemonic force in the region, leaving behind traces of an Islamicate culture, even amongst Non-Muslims (India, the State of Israel). What all these locations have in common is a shared history of Muslim/Non-Muslim encounter, an encounter that has produced shared pilgrimage practices, as well as very particular convergences that confound the generally accepted norms for what a religious tradition is and where its boundaries are.

To the end of querying these normative concepts, after sharing a wide and exemplary view of the range of shared pilgrimage's geography and praxis, I will begin to define the terms and thus the range of meaning accorded to the key concepts of Religion, Space, Ritual and Hospitality, which are foundational to this area of enquiry. Having been familiarised with the practical geographic and cultural background of shared pilgrimage generally and the constructs forming the lens through which the research is undertaken, it follows to begin looking into the particular sanctuary that is the main case study.

The natural corollary to my central research question after having covered that is, 'What is the context for shared pilgrimage at Meryem Ana Evi in Ephesus, taking into consideration its history and the wider Islamic and culturally Islamicate world of which it is a part?' Therefore, in the second section, I begin to take a closer look at the particular case of the modern pilgrimage site at Ephesus, taking into account its history, particularly its ritually significant history (cults, temples, the influence of conquest and leadership change on the layout of the city and its places of worship) from the ancient world to contemporary circumstances. From there I proceed to look at what I have actually observed in what remains of Ephesus, comparing it to similar sites in Turkey, going into more depth about the site and those I met there whether self-proclaimed pilgrims or those who considered themselves only 'visitors', but focusing particularly on those with a family history of spatial practice at Mary's House, in order to uncover lineage as an aspect of context. In order to go further I address issues which appeared in the field including the role of imagination, identity, tourism, traditional notions of right behaviour (*adab*, *paidea*) and relationships.

In the final analysis I bring all of this together, adding the new ideas which have sprung from the meeting of background knowledge with theory and events in the field, finally moving on to address some of the questions around the relationship between tolerance and mixed pilgrimage, an ongoing debate in this subfield in the study of ritual and religion.

B. Literature

While there has not been an immense amount of scholarship on shared pilgrimage (indeed, Victor Turner seems to have only barely acknowledged it in his work⁴), it has recently become a focus among some scholars and has not been entirely ignored historically. Ancient commentaries, tracts against syncretism by church fathers like John Chrysostom⁵ and, importantly, the comments of al Harawi are all relevant for an historiographical context of the subject.

While there are tracts by the early Church Fathers against Judaising, due to the sharing of ritual space between early Christians and Jews (see Chapter 3) and of course mention of hybrid praxis is not unusual in a variety of texts on ancient Hellenic religion, for which it was largely the norm, it is with a writer by the name of al Harawi where we begin to see an early example of the emergence of shared pilgrimage and mixed ritualising among monotheists being noted down. Josef Meri, a noted scholar on Islamic history and Jewish-Muslim relations, has translated Ali ibn Abi Bakr al Harawi's '*Kitab al-Isharat ila Ma'rifat al-Ziyarat*'⁶ into English. Al Harawi (d.625/1215) was a writer in the already established genre of Islamic pilgrimage guides who lived during the Crusades and, in fact, served under the famous foe of the Crusaders, Saladin.⁷ Considering the circumstances of his lifetime, it is interesting that he makes mention of a number of sacred sites, including Christian, Jewish and more ancient sites and holy objects. Most importantly, he occasionally mentions that a given location is revered by groups of Jews and Muslims, Christians and Muslims or all three. The paradoxical ecumenism of the period is particularly interesting, considering the severity of the religious warfare underway and is exemplary in terms of the deep ethos of ritual mixing that was maintained even through a period of

⁴ V. and E. TURNER: *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (Oxford 1978) 9.

⁵ P. HARKINS (tran.): *The Fathers of the Church: St. John Chrysostom, Discourses Against Judaizing Christians* (Washington DC 2002).

⁶ J. MERI (tran.): *The Lonely Wayfarer's Guide to Pilgrimage* ('*Kitab al-Isharat ila Ma'rifat al-Ziyarat*') (Princeton 2004).

⁷ MERI: *The Lonely Wayfarer's Guide*, xxii.

serious conflict, pointing out how fundamentally epistemic the practice is, although of course based on a principal of *adab* and hospitality (subjects we will take up later) that was not without violations.

The subject of shared pilgrimage in the context of modern Western academia seems to have been most clearly highlighted by a British archaeologist living at the turn of the last century and carrying on research at the British School in Athens, where he came to focus on ambiguous sanctuaries in former or current Ottoman lands, mainly the Balkans and Anatolia⁸, with an additional interest in Syria and Palestine that did not fully come to fruition before his death. F. W. Hasluck (1878-1920) surveyed his locations with a distinct eye for Turkish popular religion and the transference of sanctuaries from one religious tradition's custody to another, in addition to the cases of more constant ongoing and fluid multi-religious patronage, as in this study. His work 'Christianity and Islam under the Sultans' is the most comprehensive in this genre.

From the last decades of the twentieth century to the present day, the interest in shared pilgrimage has increased, as seen particularly in the new anthropological theory of Antagonistic Tolerance put forward by Robert Hayden and the work coming from France, recently published in the volume 'Religions Traversées: Lieux saints partagés entre chrétiens, musulmans et juifs en Méditerranée'⁹ under the direction of Maria Couroucli of University of Paris X, Nanterre/L'Ecole Française d'Athènes, and Dionigi Albera of the University of Aix-en-Provence. This particular work covers the practice of shared sacred places around the Mediterranean basin, from the Balkans to Egypt and North Africa and takes a position that is clearly different from that of Hayden of the University of Pittsburgh, whose 'Antagonistic Tolerance' theory they (Albera, Couroucli and other contributors to the volume) see as unnuanced, particularly as it seems to attempt

⁸ F.W. HASLUCK: *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans* (New York 1973) vii.

⁹ D. ALBERA and M. COUROUCLI (eds): *Religions Traversées: Lieux saints partagés entre chrétiens, musulmans et juifs en Méditerranée* (Paris 2009).

to paint all shared pilgrimage spaces with one broad brush, as essentially competitive spaces rather than bee hives of diverse forms of spatial practice, holding a multiplicity of peoples, religions, motivations, opinion, ritualisations, gestures, narratives, aspirations, and therefore, inevitably, a range of intentions and communal dynamics.

Format of Research

As a beehive like phenomenon, sacred space is both chaotic and focused, on the one side often filled with individual actors operating in a number of different ways, while at the same time being predictably honey-comb like in its repeating motifs, which I seek to tease out and describe here. In order to create deeper context (somewhat akin to Geertz notion of 'thick description', making the culturally alien more understandable through extensive explanation) I take an ethnographic approach that cycles through three different processes, a method largely based on that used by the late prominent ritologist Catherine Bell of Santa Clara University in California. Her method is a three part process, beginning with a background to the ritual subject under consideration, entering into the field to explore and a return to parts two and one for analysis in the third step. During the whole of this undertaking, I will be periodically returning to an analytical mode, of course, rather than saving it entirely for the conclusion. I will enter into further detail about each aspect further on.

C. Methodology

A Question in the Study of Ritual

One would be hard pressed to make the argument that conflict and cohesion between religious and ethno-religious communities is not a timely issue. Yet, surprisingly, it is only recently that some scholars have begun to study instances of functioning shared ritual

spaces. Of late, Bowman, Hayden,¹⁰ Couroucli and Albera have, amongst others, begun commenting on these shared spaces and creating further discussion on the issue.¹¹ Looking at their work, it's clear that a methodological strategy can be developed for this relatively new subject. In order to contribute something to this expanding field, I am seeking here to contextualise the practice of shared pilgrimages between Muslims and Non-Muslims, with a particular focus on the Christian-Muslim dynamic as seen in the shrine of *Meryem Ana Evi* (The House of the Virgin Mary) in the environs of historical Ephesus, one of the currently most active examples of this category. For points of comparison, there will also be with other shrines but with a particular light on Turkey and the formerly Ottoman lands. All of this is in order to answer the question of how and why diverse religious communities converge on one sacred location to venerate the same spiritual beings, despite their apparent religious differences. At core are a number of apparent corollary questions: How does one understand the sharing of space and sacred space? What is space? What does it mean to share space for ritual? What is ritual? Was Ephesus not a centre of goddess worship in the past, before it was associated with the Virgin Mary? Why are some places, such as Jerusalem, full of highly contested space, while other examples seem to indicate that a more harmonious sharing is not only possible, but has been sustained for centuries? Below, then, there is an explanation of the ways in which these constituent issues can be brought together in order to develop some sense of how, by responding to the underlying issues around shared pilgrimage, it is possible to have a clearer view of the whys and hows of the phenomena that are of interest.

Beginning

Situated in both the Study of Religions and the interdisciplinary field of Ritual Studies, I have chosen to draw on a number of thinkers to contextualise the story of Ephesus within the greater

¹⁰ R. HAYDEN: Antagonistic Tolerance: Competitive Sharing of Religious Sites in South Asia and the Balkans, in *Current Anthropology*, 43:2 (2002).

¹¹ ALBERA, COUROUCLI: *Religions Traversées*.

questions of inter-rituality, space and inter-cultural issues. In order to begin this process I examine a few of the main thinkers, intending to illuminate the main issues via the insights and potential contradictions catalysed by their approaches to the diverse subjects under consideration. There is a focus on the key notions of religion, space, ritual, and hospitality, with further sub-issues expanded. Further, I have developed a working taxonomy of spatial interaction in shared pilgrimage and a typology of sites, in addition to an overview of similar sites that, like Ephesus, host a considerable overlap of devotees from differing religious traditions.

In putting forward some explanatory notes on the methods employed in this research project, I wish to convey something of the research process, its means and the qualitative fieldwork aspect of my work. It is not possible to approach phenomena as multi-faceted as ritual mingling and simultaneity without thinking via a broad and similarly eclectic approach. That is indeed an underlying reality of the bricolage method here employed however orderly in structure. The aim is to analyze a widely occurring phenomenon (one would be tempted to say 'universal' were it not such a fraught term) by layers of increasing focus on the particular: in this case, the House of the Virgin Mary in Ephesus and the area's religious topography. Analysis and observation will range from the abstract to the concrete and from the broadest (multi-religious convergence) to a very specific sacred site on the Aegean coast of Turkey. Further, the range of thinkers here invoked will be wide, with a further hybridity and eclecticism drawing on anthropological, sociological, ritological, historical and primary religious text sources, chiefly because of the relative novelty of the subject matter. At no point here do I commit myself entirely to any one thinker but, instead, will draw on what appears to be useful, wherever that originates. However, this is not a license to take any particular construction out of context. In each case I intend to convey the meaning for the given scholar while also being clear where I disagree or limit her or his approach within my own work.

In order to conduct an analysis of space and spatial practice, I must know the history, place and places which I endeavour to understand and I must analyse them through a particular lens which conceptually equips both the researcher and reader with the

tools necessary to comment on the practices and spaces of multi-religious pilgrimage and devotion. This will be a three-part process of informed backgrounding and theory, followed by field work and concluded with empirical reflection on the observations made on site in Turkey. The methodological explanation here presented illustrates these same stages. Just as ritual itself is a product of an historical bricolage (and multireligious spaces even more so)¹², so this work is focused on a drawing from a collage of sources in order to achieve an overall contextualised vision of the multi-practiced spaces wherein Muslims and Christians (among others) meet on common ritual ground.

Structure

The form of the analysis will follow that of Catherine Bell's suggested research method for the study of religion and ritual, as put forward by the SANPAD project, in which Tilburg University's Ritual Studies programme (including myself) is participating with the University of the Free State in South Africa. This approach has three main stages: The first step is to look at the issue with an historical background, particularly focusing on the approaches to the issue thus far. The second step is to propose an interpretive framework, with the logical progression on to an application of the above to case studies, as the third step. Further, there is a cycling process in which we return back through the three steps in order to refine the discussion, to conclude and synthesise.¹³

¹² P. POST: 'A Symbolic Bridge Between Faiths: Holy Ground for Liquid Ritual' in M. POORTHUIS and J. SCHWARTZ (eds): *Between Syncretism and Independence: Models of Interaction Between Judaism and Christianity, Jewish and Christian Perspectives 17* (Leiden/Boston 2008) 363.

¹³ C. BELL: 'Pragmatic Theory' in T. JANSEN and H. ROTHSTEIN (eds.): *Secular Theories on Religion: Current Perspectives* (Copenhagen 2000) 9-20 and C. BELL: *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford 1992) 5-6.

*First Section, Ephesus, Parallel Spaces, Key Concepts,
Heuristics*

Within this first phase, I contextualise on three fronts: the historical background of Ephesus as a location, an overall view of a variety of locations where Muslims and Non-Muslims similarly share spaces of prayer and in what ways they do so. This is followed by a discussion of the key concepts that form basic pillars to understanding the practices under consideration.

This first element of the process requires a broad vision. Such an expansion takes place in three ways: First, there is an overview of the world of Muslim-Non-Muslim ritual encounters, from Jewish-Muslim saints in North Africa to Hindu-Buddhist-Muslim-Indigenous sites in Sri Lanka. What will emerge is a renewed sense of how common the practice of shared pilgrimage is, particularly in the lands where Islam has added its presence to the local religiosity.

It then follows to clarify something of the forms in which these shared pilgrimages places differ and/or are similar. In order to do this, I propose a two pronged approach: First, a typology of sites that explains the most significant feature, the object of veneration that draws pilgrims of more than one religious community. That is, of what type are the spaces that host and attract pilgrims? Secondly, I give a more taxonomical series that labels the processes of relationship between the communities that converge on these locations, from the most convivial to the most hostile of relationships.

Finally, for the completion of the first stage, there is an examination of the key concepts underlying the entirety of this enquiry: religion, ritual, space and hospitality, all of which intersect at Meryem Ana and all sites of shared pilgrimage. For developing a definition of religion and ritual, the chief sources are Kim Knott, Danièle Hervieu-Léger and, to a lesser extent, Ronald Grimes. On the study of space, I have followed Knott's lead in invoking Henri Lefebvre and his triad of perceived, conceived and practiced space. For the purposes of unfolding the notion of hospitality, I have looked at both Biblical and Koranic narratives around the theme and the ways in which Louis Massignon and Jacques Derrida spoke of hospitality: for Massignon a basis for ecumenical relationships, for Derrida a building block of language and the full reception of the other.

In completing this first stage, the territory of the historical/cultural issue is established, along with some background in approaches to the contextualisation of shared pilgrimage. At this point, it remains to enter into the field with knowledge and begin new formulations of the issue through engagement with examples of the types of space and spatial practice under consideration.

Second Section, Phenomenology of the Site, Case Studies and Preliminary Contextualisations

An awareness of the history of Ephesus, like all history, is indispensable to contextualisation and is, in itself, illuminating. The story of Ephesus is one of an early and prolonged multi-religiosity in its earlier period, followed by waves of Christian and Islamic conquest adding to its development as a religious and cultural palimpsest. The House of the Virgin Mary is what remains of a living presence on 'Nightingale Hill' in what remains of the historical Ephesus near the area of the modern Turkish town of Selçuk. Where, however, some measure of consistency can be found from the ancient to the modern eras, is both the veneration of a feminine figure and the basic sacrality of the area as a space of multiple ritual significances and sacred history through a number of historical periods.

In the second stage, direct encounter with the site(s) is highlighted, fulfilling the approach of Catherine Bell's three-step method by addressing step two and part of her step three. That is, (a) an interpretive framework is set out in conjunction with and in preparation for an entry into the field and (b) some interpretation of the significance of the data is already being provided (verging slightly into the territory of the third part of the cycle, the application of the knowledge gained) which is finally and fully synthesised in the conclusion. The case studies centre on the practices in Ephesus, contrasted and compared with similarly practiced sanctuary spaces in Turkey, particularly Istanbul, which has an old and established lineage of shared holy places.

Approaching these places I pose a series of questions: What is the inter-religious element of the attendance at the shrines? From which communities do the pilgrims come? How do they manage to share the sacred places, practicing spatially in the same locations? What are the narratives around the place, including those not

directly related to praxis, but pertaining to the wider cultural arena of Turkish-Greek encounter, Muslim-Christian identities etc...? Finally, in what way do these spaces compare or contrast with the main example in Ephesus?

More broadly, the spatial and ritual analysis of the site falls into the greater questions of how and why Muslims and Non-Muslims are able to receive one another in Ephesus and elsewhere. The approach to the sites at this stage is to speak to the whys and hows of shared pilgrimage by taking on the core themes of Imagination, *Adab*, Relationships, Tourism vs. Tradition and Identity.

Why?

Importantly, shared pilgrimage is a result of multiple intersecting forces but, in particular, it is both *necessity* and *commonality* which share a significant role in bringing together otherwise separated worlds of belief and spatial practice. Most basically, a kind of practicality brings together two or more religious communities and their individual representatives. That is to say that a given shrine answers a need, one more urgent than that of assent to a particular religious doctrine. Instead, a sacred *locus* may provide sustenance to one in search of healing not yet sufficiently met by a medical doctor or the rituals of a pilgrim's own birth tradition. This is underscored by an acceptance of what has been termed the 'basic sacral' by Paul Post of Tilburg University, based, in turn, on the work of Evans of Brigham Young University,¹⁴ Knott and Hervieu-Léger.

Further, there is a more liminal and abstract space, which will be put forward here as an indispensable element for an explanation of why convergence takes place. At its core, the argument is that a convergence of religious traditions around one figure must also be imaginal in order to be practiced in physical space. Parallel to this theory are several relevant theories by noted thinkers. From the more traditional and substantive perspective, there is the notion of

¹⁴ M. EVANS: 'The Sacred: Differentiating, Clarifying and Extending Concepts', in *Review of Religious Research*, 45:1 (2003) 32-47 and POST: 'A Symbolic Bridge', 366-369.

the *alam al-mithal* or Imaginal World as found in the writings and teachings of Islamic esotericist Muhiyiddin Ibn Arabi.¹⁵ From the perspective of continental philosophy there is the aforementioned work of Lefebvre emphasising the process of encounter between a subjective personal world and that of its physically constructed environment. Lefebvre, and by extension Knott, have much to say about the imaginative element of spatial practice of many kinds. To this we will be adding this particular line of pilgrimage to the established discourses on spatial-conceptual dynamics.

These are not the only elements, of course. There is commonality as found not only in imagination but in culture, shared history and identification with place. In imagination, historical reality and attribution of identity to space, the modern remains of Ephesus and the House of the Virgin are Muslim and Christian, Turkish and Greek, ancient and modern. This multi-cultural, multi-identitiedness links to a motivation based on commonality that underlies many of the motivations for visiting shared pilgrimage sites. One could say that these ambiguous sites are shared *because* they are shared (i.e. because they are *a priori* part of a shared physical and cultural space), at the risk of engaging in what would appear to be a circular tautology. This deeper reality of co-inhabitation culturally and historically, naturally links to a shared and negotiated spatial practice, an *adab* (*savoir faire*) of hospitality and ritual, when it functions at its best.

How?

I further explore, during my observations of ritual on site, the operation of *adab*, a form of traditional Islamic etiquette and lifestyle that is not only Arabic and pre-Islamic in origin but also finds its way into the cultural context of the Non-Muslim peoples living in Islamic societies. *Adab* regulates relationships in all contexts and particularly continues to thrive within religious spaces in the modern world.¹⁶ *Adab* underpins the practice of hospitality, a

¹⁵ S. HIRTENSTEIN: *The Unlimited Mercifier: The Spiritual Life and Thought of Ibn 'Arabi* (London 1999).

¹⁶ B. METCALF (ed.): *Moral Conduct and Authority: the Place of Adab in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley 1984).

key concept as mentioned above. It is through the traditional systems of relationships and etiquette that order can be maintained in situations as precarious as that of shared pilgrimage and these codes are precisely what I seek to observe in the holy places under consideration, probing to see to what extent they do or do not appear to structure the spaces and spatial relations. The previously mentioned factor of hospitality culture (an element of *adab*) is also key to the means by which shared pilgrimage is facilitated and is part of the relational paradigm that exists in a number of the traditional cultures within the cultural zone we are examining, many of which have a value on relationships between communities (often called *komşuluk* in the Balkans, a term of Turkish derivation). Examination of phenomena in the field leads to a grounding of many of these notions in terms of actually observable behaviour and articulated identity-community discourses.

Third Section, Cyclical Return, Analysis, Conclusions

In the third part, something of a review and synthesis takes place which necessitates a return to the previous processes of historical and conceptual contextualisation with a look at what hypothetical notions have confirmed or negated the previous premises. A return to the initial questions will be followed by an examination of earlier research and the fieldwork, in light of what is known so far about the subject of shared pilgrimage. The whys and hows of (particularly) Muslim-Christian shared pilgrimage, are seen not only in the theory and history explored but also in the grounded experience of the multi-religious devotional spaces of Turkey.

Bell speaks of the third step in ritual studies analysis as ‘applying this interpretation to a field of interrelated issues...’¹⁷ a step already begun in part two of this project and finalised in the conclusion, a synthesis of the ‘field of interrelated issues’ that showed themselves to be particularly relevant, a field entered into with a background in the subject. That background being one of not only the history of shared pilgrimage in the Islamic and Islamicate domains, but also working definitions of religion, space,

¹⁷ C. BELL: *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford 1992) 6.

ritual, hospitality and syncretism. Combining the pre-knowledge with the themes that appeared in the field, a picture emerges of the ways in which Ephesus and Turkey generally shed light on the motivation and means that underlie shared pilgrimage from the particular point in the web that these locations are, spaces exemplary, to some degree, of shared pilgrimage generally and therefore generative of insight.

D. Overview: Shared Pilgrimage Topography, Typology and Taxonomy

Religious harmony, as a significant social issue, is increasingly a popular theme which has often tended to focus on formal clerical dialogue, not taking into account many of the more grass roots contexts in which religious traditions merge, emerge and encounter one another. Here, in particular, we are referring to meetings that may or may not be seen as syncretistic, in a ritual space, between two or more religious traditions. These overlapping spaces may or may not actually be moving together toward a harmonious end but are, at a minimum, in some way conjoined spatially or are patronising the very same holy persons, places and festivals. It is clear that this subject is highly layered and has many intersecting angles.

The unusual reality of this subject is that ritual overlapping is often unknown in one cultural context and taken as an automatic given in another. That is to say, in much of Western society the practice has not existed despite the presence of, for example, a large Jewish minority within the borders of Europe and the Americas. Neither Christians nor Jews have, for example, venerated the saints of the other community in significant numbers in regions where Jews and Christians are the main two religious bodies. There are no examples, to the best of my knowledge, of large numbers of Eastern European Christians flocking to the *Baal Shems* of Russia and Poland (Jewish mystical teachers and masters) to receive their teachings, nor have they historically venerated their memories ritually, despite a great deal of presence in the religious landscapes of Eastern Europe.

By contrast, Jewish Shrines in Morocco and Iran, as we will see, have all, almost without exception, been venerated by Muslims, as have many Christian shrines been similarly revered by Muslims, with the reverse also taking place, occasionally. In these cultures, there does not appear to be an elaborate discourse to explain the practice to any significant degree. It is simply the epistemic context, the established *habitus* for centuries. Paul Post has pointed out, in his analysis of Ronald Grimes position on syncretism (and the position of others) that ritual is based on pre-established knowledge and cultural cues which are not always easily transferred to other cultures nor understood outside of their original contexts.¹⁸

Similarly, shared pilgrimage ritual is not something that would tend to call out for analysis in many traditional cultures where it is a given, nor would it always be readily identified with any ideology, although sacred reasoning, such as Koranic principles, are sometimes quoted when journalists and others enquire. The intention of this project is to begin clarifying what creates the circumstances for this little understood devotion, to see the ways in which it manifests and to locate these sacred spaces along a continuum from those that tend towards harmony, maintaining a consistent sharing-ethic and those which have gone as far as to become locations of sectarian tension and rivalry. The same places are, like electrical charges, equally capable of powerful confluence or dangerous polarisation.

While there seems to be some surprise on the part of some, about the phenomena described below, what we see is an employment of ritual forms appearing in various places and diverse times but reflecting a cosmology with much more in common than perhaps commonly thought. Perhaps the reason for surprise is chiefly connected to the set of presumptions that many in Western culture maintain and which even scholars can carry with them, unconsciously and unexamined. The noted Anthropologist Talal Asad, raised in Pakistan by a Western Jewish convert to Islam while attending missionary schools, has brought a particularly interesting perspective to the study of religion in a post-colonial context. He consistently points in his work to the

¹⁸ POST: 'A Symbolic Bridge', 364-365.

necessity of examining our constructs in the Western context by pointing out that when a scholar finds a phenomenon difficult to classify within her or his system of knowledge, it may well be that the scholar's constructs are too deeply rooted in a Western or Christian ethos to be able to encounter the (in this case) ritual practice of non-Christian or non-Western peoples. This could of course apply in other cultural contexts but Asad speaks, in this case, to the very familiar discourses developing out of the Western European world, from the Enlightenment forward, and its colonial descendants, globally. *It is this that I refer to when speaking of 'the West' in this text.* I have also encountered a similar reverse phenomenon in which, for example, some from the Middle East and the Indian Subcontinent have difficulty with Western notions of religious identity, for example, or (more often) the lack thereof.

Asad's theory¹⁹ (particularly because he applies this to the study of ritual, especially what we consider 'Eastern ritual') is relevant because of what might be called 'the surprise factor'. As previously mentioned, inter-rituality is almost unheard of in the Jewish, Catholic and Protestant encounter that is 'the West'.²⁰ For that reason, there is a basic level at which such things are simply unfamiliar. Further, this century has seen the further development of the already latent idea (again this is particularly in what is labelled the 'West') that the Islamic world is a generally dogmatic and hyper-religious place. It therefore comes as a surprise that Muslims, in particular, would have a fluid sense of the role of sacred place. This seems to also come from the much publicised situation in Jerusalem where polarisation around ritual and space is at the centre of a great deal of media coverage in the region despite

¹⁹ C. BELL: *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford 1997) 265 and T. ASAD: *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore 1993).

²⁰ Of course, one cannot generalise all ritual phenomena as practiced by all people, at all times as there are always exceptions. One example is found in, E. SHOHAM-STEINER: 'Jews and Healing at Medieval Saints Shrines: Participation, Polemics and Shared Culture', in *Harvard Theological Review* 103 (2010) 111-129. Large scale, public, multi-religious Jewish-Christian pilgrimage, such as those held by Copts and Muslims in Egypt, for example, is not a historical tradition, according to my survey of literature.

the fact that there are a variety of alternative locations in which ritual is practiced not only harmoniously but at times even syncretically, only a few miles away, such as at Nebi Samuel, in the North-West of Jerusalem.

Panorama of the Inter-Ritual World

The particularities of inter-rituality in Ephesus do not appear in a vacuum. In fact, they reflect a dynamic found in Muslim-Christian, Muslim-Jewish and Muslim-Hindu varieties. The phenomenon of multi-faith pilgrimages and shrines is both ancient and widespread, although often largely unnoticed. The intention here is to broaden an understanding of this practice by seeing it in its wider context, that of the Islamic and Islamicate world, stretching from the Balkans to Iran and Morocco to India. In each case, the manifestation is entirely unique, with its own sense of sacrality, its own use of space, its own history, combination of participating communities and ritual practices. This diversity is formidable and always resists generalisation. Each place is also unique in terms of the degree to which it has been a place of intercommunal harmony and meeting, or a locus of division and contestation. For that reason, nothing said here can be said to cover all forms of this ritual activity. Instead we will see a few patterns which can be outwardly observed and which serve to illuminate the understanding of these practices. In order to create this broader spectrum of understanding, we will look at a number of shrines and see where they fit within a few key categories.

All of the sacred places of interest can be seen as locations in which a need is fulfilled - a need for power, a need to revere the awe-inspiring or a need to receive help and often a combination of all of these. Of course, none of these is exclusive and often mixes with the other elements. So, we will categorise them according to their basic nature and function for the believer. The largest category is the healing/petition shrine, where devotees seek assistance for a variety of needs and ailments, from fertility to healing and even exorcism. Of these, most fit into the further category of sacred places which have devotees of multiple traditions for the simple reason that the location is sacred to a

figure holy to more than one community. There are also locations which have many of these elements but are particularly ecumenical in periods of pilgrimage and places where the layering of the site has at times become tense, forming less of an inter-faith bridge and more of a flashing point demanding resolution of the site's ambiguity. All of the places we will examine fall into one of these types and all are scattered around the globe but mainly concentrated from the Mediterranean basin to the Middle East and South Asia. The shrines under consideration are ones that are currently in operation (or have only recently become less popular for political reasons in the last century) and the emphasis is on citation of current journalism and travel writing (generally electronic) which relates direct and recent experience of the localities under consideration. Where necessary, older and theoretical texts are also cited.

Jewish-Muslim Shrines

These sanctuaries can be classified by the ways in which the traditions they represent intersect via religious demography. There are layers of encounter that can be clearly laid out which create a panorama of ritual convergence. Specifically, Iran, Iraq and North Africa, for example, have long hosted significant Jewish populations alongside their Muslim majorities in cities such as Baghdad (Iraq), Shiraz (Iran) and Fez (Morocco), with the rural areas outside these major centres also often containing Jewish sacred sites frequented by Muslims.

One significant example in Iran is the tomb of the Prophet Daniel in Susa, which alongside the tombs of Esther and Mordechai in Hamdan, are of Jewish significance but inevitably receive petitioners and pilgrims from outside the Jewish community. The biblical Prophet Daniel is said to be buried within a shrine of Susa and the modern shrine has both an active Jewish prayer area and a mosque attached to it, with a distinctive ancient cone shaped roof and a traditional Persian Muslim style front.

The origins of the shrine are obscure (as with most ancient shrines) but it is said that before the establishment of the sanctuary, the remains of Daniel were being shifted from one Jewish ghetto to

another within the city, on opposite sides of the river. The reason given for this by Benjamin of Tudela (12th Century Rabbi and geographer) is that the tomb was believed to have brought prosperity to the Jewish quarter where the bier was initially kept and for that reason the citizens of the other, poorer Jewish quarter requested that the tomb be leant to them. So, the bier continued being sent back and forth between the two parts of the city until the Seljuk Shah of Persia, Sanjar (died 1158) insisted that the practice was disrespectful to the memory of the Prophet Daniel. He fixed the bier to the river bed at a bridge connecting the two parts of the city and built there a shrine for both Jews and Non-Jews.²¹ In recent years, this shrine has become an important gathering point for the affirmation of Jewish identity among Iranian Jews who, while making up the largest Jewish population in the Muslim Middle East, have also lost much of their number through immigration. An associated press article from February of 2008 says that a group of 200 Iranian Jews gathered for a pilgrimage to this shrine, as recently as that same month.²² Because of the antiquity of the Jewish community in Iran there are other similar examples of prophetic figures drawing Jewish, Muslim and sometimes Christian pilgrims, such as the shrine of Esther and Mordechai in Hamdan, which is known to draw women petitioning for children.²³

Both the prophets Ezra and Ezekiel are said to be buried in Iraq, a land historically linked very closely with the origins and early development of the Abrahamic, prophetic religions. While there are currently only a tiny number of Jews still living in Iraq, there was historically and into the 20th century, a sizable Jewish community in places such as Baghdad. The Jewish community of Iraq patronised the Jewish-Muslim shrines of figures such as Ezra and Ezekiel, shrines which, while no longer actively drawing Jews, still do operate. An NPR (US National Public Radio) interview with the Sheikh whose tribe is responsible for the maintenance of the shrine indicates that he

²¹ HASLUCK: *Christianity and Islam*, 300-303.

²² Associated Press: <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/954647.html>, retrieved 26 September, 2008.

²³ H. ELIASIAN: <http://www.iran-heritage.org/interestgroups/judaism-monument.htm> retrieved 27 September, 2008.

values the Jewish origins of the space and hopes to see members of the Jewish community return to the shrine of Ezekiel in the future. He also indicates a Koranic basis for the respect owed to non-Muslim places of worship.²⁴ This is a case (returning to the introduction) in which a patron puts forward an ideological/theological element in his explanation of the shared shrine.

In another corner of the Islamic world, there is another Jewish-Muslim cult motif. Two interesting and popular shrines in Morocco are those of Rabbi Abraham Ben Zmirro in Safi and that of a woman known variously as Sol Hachuela or Suleikha in Fez. In the case of Rabbi Abraham, a large number of Jews converge on the Moroccan city of Safi in his memory regularly and the current journalistic and governmental discourse seems to indicate that the relationship between the Jewish pilgrims and the Muslim locals (who also sometimes revere the Rabbi) is seen to be positive and indicative of an historical legacy of tolerance. To make this point, Muslim representatives of Morocco's King Muhammed VI prayed alongside Jewish community leaders during the festivities of July 2008 and a band of Jews and Muslims played Moroccan and Judeo-Moroccan music together.²⁵

Similarly, the Fez shrine of Suleikha 'Sol' Hachuela is highly venerated by women, in particular, who are said to be from all three Abrahamic communities. They come to ask the intercession of a young woman publicly executed but about whom narratives vary. Most versions agree that there was a romantic ordeal in which Suleikha's involvement with a Muslim (sometimes said to be a sultan) lead to the claim that she had converted to Islam which, upon her denial, may have been treated as apostasy, thus meriting the death penalty.

There is a *hiloula* or pilgrimage to her tomb and a memorialisation of her tragic end on a regular basis. According to author Ruth Knoffo Setton and others who have written accounts of the folk-religious practices in their Jewish communities of

²⁴ National Public Radio:
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1387279> retrieved 22 September, 2008.

²⁵ Morocco.com: <http://www.morocco.com/blog/jewish-pilgrimage-in-safi-a-lesson-on-tolerance> retrieved 28, (retrieved 20 September, 2008).

origin in Morocco, she is petitioned for help with children and other issues particularly relevant to the lives of women in traditional societies.²⁶

Christian-Muslim Convergence

The sharing of cult-space between Christians and Muslims is very extensive historically, if not quite as obvious today. The foremost cataloguer of dual ritual spaces in the Ottoman Empire, F. W. Hasluck, wrote, not long after the turn of the century:

‘Again, the frequentation of Christian healing-shrines by Turks is so common a phenomenon at the present day that it would deserve no more than a passing mention here but for the fact that it may have been an important stage in the transference of many holy places from Christianity to Islam...’²⁷

And, focusing on an important motivation for this matter-of-fact pilgrimage genre, he states:

‘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.’²⁸

Beginning in Turkey, we have a number of such examples, although they are, per force, less numerous since the population exchanges between Greece and Turkey that took place in 1923. Some do, however, persist to greater and lesser degrees. As we shall see, the House of the Virgin Mary in Ephesus may be one of the most active and international shrines that is maintained (or was, previously) with both Christians and Muslims in mind.

²⁶ University of Toronto:
<http://www.utoronto.ca/wjudaism/journal/spring2002/setton.html>. (retrieved 22 September, 2008).

²⁷ HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 65-66.

²⁸ HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 65-66.

A lesser known but important example is the Armenian Orthodox Church of the Holy Archangels in Istanbul which was taken over by the Armenians, being originally owned by the Greek Orthodox Church. Every year around September 14th (or the second weekend of the month) Christians, Muslims and others gather in the church to request a miracle which is granted annually on that day via an ecstatic utterance. One woman from the congregation, in an altered state, calls out the name of another member of the congregation who will, for that year, allegedly receive the healing.²⁹ Because of the potency of the beliefs surrounding this church, interest is high from Muslims who are present in great numbers. In fact, according to a comment in the Turkish Daily News taken from the Turkish daily paper *Hurriyet*, the priests of the church pass out rugs and prayer-beads to Muslim congregants during the ritual.³⁰ Like many shrines in the Near East, the church's healing power is also linked to its fountain.³¹ The following in other churches is similar but is sometimes difficult to document because of the informality of individuals and small groups coming to Christian shrines, as I have seen in the Church of the Theotokos of Blacharnae in Istanbul, amongst other places.

In the small Damascene suburb of Seidnaya in Syria, there is a convent named for the Virgin Mary, who is known to grant, in particular, her intercession to those who come to her shrine seeking to have children. Because of this, the monastery has a large number of Muslim and Druze pilgrims in addition to its Christian contingency. In fact, according to British historian and author William Dalrymple, there is a majority of Muslim pilgrims to the shrine as explained to him by one of the resident nuns who indicated an emphasis on large families in Islamic custom as a possible explanation. He then goes on to the question of ritualised behaviours, physical gestures and movement in the space in question.³²

²⁹ Interview, 10 August, 2009.

³⁰ *Hurriyet*: <http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/archives.php?id=14180> (retrieved 28, September, 2008).

³¹ <http://www.lrapr.org/main.aspx?Action=DisplayNews&NewsCode=N000001628&Lang=ENG> retrieved (25, September, 2008).

³² W. DALRYMPLE, http://www.travelintelligence.net/wsd/articles/art_756.html commenting on

Dalrymple observes a few key things: First of all, he makes note of the large number of visibly Muslim people in attendance and describes a degree of gender divide. Many of the Muslims are actually wearing conservative Muslim dress such as beards and veils and are presumably Sunnis that are not marginal in their observance of Islamic custom. The men appear to often be engaged in *salah* (the daily Islamic ritual prayer), making prostrations on prayer mats brought into the church. Around them, priests swing censers, stepping over and around the men at prayer. Dalrymple describes the priests as “almost apologetic” as they step around the praying men. By contrast, Dalrymple sees the Muslim women watching the Christian women in order to know what they should do. They follow the Christian women to the icons, lighting candles and imitating what they see. According to Sister Tecla it is also a common practice for female pilgrims to eat the sanctuary’s candle wax, make vows and sleep over night in the church. They then wake up and drink from a sacred well the next morning. It may come as a surprise to many that it also not unheard of for some women to vow that they will have their children baptised, should they be granted them by the intercession of Our Lady of Seidnaya, according to their belief.³³

With its history of tension between the Coptic Christian minority and Muslim majority, Egypt is a particularly interesting country to look at for its holy places which draw both communities together. The devotion to the Holy Family as it has been practiced in Egypt is detailed in the work of Otto Meinardus (1925-2005), esteemed Coptologist of the American University of Cairo.³⁴ In his work, he

the research for his book *From the Holy Mountain: a Journey into the Shadow of Byzantium* (London 1998) retrieved 17 August, 2008. For a more scholarly source on Seidnaya, there is mention of this church going back to the Crusades in European sources: D. BARAZ: ‘The Incarnated Icon of Saidnaya Goes West: A Re-examination of the Motif in the Light of New Manuscript Evidence’, in *Museon* 108 (1995) 181-191. No mention is made in the Arabic pilgrimage text (including mixed pilgrimage) from the Crusader Period: J. MERI (tran.) A HARAWI: *A Lonely Wayfarer’s Guide to Pilgrimage* (Princeton 2004).

³³ W. DALRYMPLE:
http://www.travelintelligence.net/wsd/articles/art_756.html, retrieved 17 August, 2008.

³⁴ Al-Ahram: <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/769/eg12.htm> retrieved 27 September, 2008.

draws on a number of sources regarding the traditional narratives and shrines connected to the route of the Holy Family in Egypt. He borrows comfortably from Muslim sources and comments on shrines where Muslim devotion is particularly noticeable.³⁵ In addition, *Maulids* or religious festivals are extremely popular amongst some Egyptians and, while the term has an Islamic (particularly Sufi) connotation, the term has been used in Egypt to refer to its Jewish and Christian equivalents. The *Maulid* of St. George, in particular is popular with both Muslims and Christians.³⁶

Perhaps, however, the most public manifestation of this phenomenon that is currently receiving widespread attention in the Egyptian media is the ministry of Father Makari Younon, who performs dramatic healings and exorcisms on both Christians and Muslims at St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Heliopolis, Cairo. While there has been some commentary from the media about the presence of Muslims in his congregation, we will see that the response given by Father Makari and his congregants is a template for religious discourse surrounding many of these shrines. As expected, the Father points to God as the source of healing, as if to suggest that it is not his place to distinguish who can and cannot receive divine assistance. Another Coptic priest interviewed says that many in Egypt are pragmatic and will go to either a sheikh or a priest because their goal is healing rather than maintaining any sort of confessional purity, when in a time of difficulty.³⁷

South Asia

India and the subcontinent present possibly the most diverse manifestation of the subject at hand, in an amazingly varied constellation of creeds, identities, rituals and forms of

³⁵ O. MEINARDUS: 'The Holy Family in Egypt'
<http://www.coptic.net/articles/HolyFamilyInEgypt.txt> retrieved 28 September, 2008.

³⁶ J. S. SCHIELKE: *Snacks and Saints: Mawlid festivals and the politics of festivity, piety and modernity in contemporary Egypt* (Amsterdam 2006) 45-46.

³⁷ Associated Free Press:
<http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5iTTs3ipsMvxceJwIv4RFb8WG5Nw>
retrieved 27 September, 2008.

hybridity/syncretism, sometimes practiced in a particularly South Asian spirit of universalism. This however is increasingly giving way to more division and competition. For the purposes of this study, it is worth mentioning two particular patterns of saint's sanctuaries that inhabit a liminal space: One is represented by Shirdi Sai Baba who, like the poet-saint Kabir, could never be fully identified as a Hindu or a Muslim. For this reason, a tradition has grown around him which, while initially ecumenical, has increasingly leaned towards Hinduisation in modern India. Sai Baba of Shirdi taught with a mix of Islamic and Hindu terminology, ritual and even labelled spaces in an intentionally syncretic way, calling the mosque where he taught by the Hindu name, "Dwarkamai".³⁸

By contrast, the shrines of Sufi saints such as Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi and Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer, have a distinct praxis and context in which Hindus make up large numbers of the devotees attending the shrine's events and making petitions on the grounds while the shrine has always maintained its own Islamic Sufi character, until the rise of the Hindu right, which has sought, at times, to Hinduise such sanctuaries by force. This, however, is very recent.³⁹ Of course, this Hinduisation process of the right (perhaps seen as reclamation rather than Hinduisation by the Hindutva movement) is not universal. There are exceptions, such as the Buddhist-Hindu-Muslim-Indigenous holy place in Sri Lanka, which is known as Kataragama.⁴⁰ Situated in a different political climate, it continues to be evenly divided.

Typology

In order to better approach the subject, it is useful to create a typology of the different forms that the sanctuaries and ritual

³⁸ Sai Baba of Shirdi: <http://www.saibabaoofshirdi.net/>, retrieved 28 September, 2008.

³⁹ The South Asian: http://www.the-south-asian.com/April2005/Sacred_Spaces_Yoginder_Sikand.htm retrieved 25 September, 2008.

⁴⁰ B. PFAFFENBERGER: 'The Kataragama Pilgrimage: Hindu-Buddhist Interaction and its Significance in Sri Lanka's Polyethnic Social System', in *The Journal of Asian Studies* 38:2 (1979) 253-270.

practices under discussion can be classified within. First we have to understand what sorts of centres of spiritual power and space are commonly multi-religious, surveying around which places, objects and ritual acts inter-rituality tends to gather and how.

Natural Sites

Official churches and shrines are not the only *loci* of commonly held sacrality in the encounters between religious traditions. In fact, in the context of the formerly Ottoman world and similar surrounding societies, we find a number of interesting examples of the way that human communities construct sacrality, like a web, around natural sites deemed important for their basic power and then go on to categorize them through the lenses of a particular inherited religious tradition. In this category, I would create two subdivisions: the secular site (a term employed by Hasluck) and the multi-creedal natural site.

It is also true that, before looking at the phenomenon of nature-based cults (formally religious or not) it is important to query the somewhat cliché dichotomy that sees these naturally-based practices as ‘pagan’ and opposed to the ‘high’ religiosity of the established and institutionalised Christianities and Islams. Querying the assumptions we carry on the topic is a must. It is definitely unhelpful to adopt the view that such things as ritual veneration of natural areas are ‘primitive’ as they are often so named in older orientalist discourse. Perhaps it would be better to place these traditions simply in the earlier, but surviving, strata among the layers of religiosity found in many of the world’s sacred places. Often, the only real distinction that can be made between, for example, reverence for a sacred stone in Mecca or the slab upon which Jesus was laid after his crucifixion, is clear consecration by an established religious body in light of its historical memory. By way of distinction, the Turkic practice of leaving strings on sacred trees is sometimes seen to be ‘pagan’ in origin because it is perhaps recognised more informally, without a historic visit from a figure of hagiographical import and is held sacred by small, less powerful groups. Hasluck, for example, speaks of the Yuruk people as a ‘primitive’ group that will simply

reverence a tree or a spring but that, at more 'advanced' stages, other ethnic groups/civilisations will attempt to 'anthropomorphise' the site by associating it with a saint.⁴¹ There is a clear connection, in his approach, between the 'primitiveness' of the people and their 'primitive' beliefs. He does not, for example, take the angle that Turcoman peoples have often simply *chosen* to live a life closer to nature than, for example, Byzantine or Persian peoples who evolved a culture focused on architectural magnificence. Instead he tends toward the discourse of his time which was to make a value judgement which in turn devalues the ritual practice, the belief behind it and its relation to nature.

Considering new ways of viewing the physical, natural basis of place veneration could open up a great space for the analysis of a new post-colonial view of texts such as Hasluck's but here I hope that it suffices to state just a few things: First, it seems unlikely to me that these nature-focused traditions are seen by those who practice them as in any way opposed to monotheism and the subaltern perspective of the lesser-heard is just as relevant as that of the mainstream, more starkly black and white position held by clergy and scholars. If one looks at the documentary produced some years ago on Habiba, a widely respected Uzbek folk healer (who could be described as inhabiting a subaltern space to a certain degree, while also being privileged, due to her positioning as a woman and traditional healer in ex-Soviet Central Asia), there is a certain fluidity of spiritual practice and outlook that is very common in the voices of those who are commonly underrepresented. Gayatri Spivak, one of the current and controversial voices of Subaltern Studies describes this approach as being a more 'fluid' or 'supple' way of thinking, as she discovered while working with the Advisi people of India.⁴²

Habiba identifies herself as a Muslim, is an initiate of the Naqshibandi Sufi order, and uses techniques which would traditionally be classed as shamanistic and pre-Muslim or Non-

⁴¹ HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 105.

⁴² G. SPIVAK: 'Ethics and Politics in Tagore, Coetzee and Certain Scenes of Teaching', in *Diacritics* 32.3-4 (Baltimore 2002) 17-31 and, online lecture: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZHH4ALRFHw> accessed 11 January, 2011.

Muslim by many. She receives visions of sacred animals as in the classic shamanistic model and treats patients with water from a sacred mountain. She also claims to be assisted by St. Nicholas, who she calls by his Russian name 'St. Nikolai Ugodnik'. In her interview⁴³ she speaks of the different layers of religiosity in Uzbekistan (including the worship of the 'Great Goddess Anahita') and sees them as a natural progression rather than traditions which ended with the coming of Islam. By understanding such lesser known voices as hers, we can be enriched in our perspective on the phenomenon of inter-rituality. Perhaps we cannot understand the phenomenon at all, otherwise. Here I cannot claim to convey completely the voice of the subaltern perspective, indeed such a feat may not be possible anyway.⁴⁴ Rather, I want to at least acknowledge it as one of many ways of encountering a sacred site and, definitely, an underlying influence on the way that people have revered spaces such as the Virgin's house in Ephesus, where believers, tourists and others tie red strings at the shrine, a common and ancient practice in the rituality of Turkic peoples (among others). That is to say, labelling a particular practice as 'pagan' is almost always a judgement, whereas observing it in a somewhat more phenomenological and direct way is a more novel and open approach, hopefully yielding more insight.

So, we have the natural sites which are clearly connected to a narrative from a hagiography or holy book and we have those places which, a bit closer to the early nature-based religiosity of humanity, are not so identified. Exemplifying the former, in Anatolia we have two main places claiming to be the Cave of the Seven Sleepers as described in the Koran and Christian tradition, they are the catacombs of Ephesus and Tarsus, with Ephesus having a stronger Christian history and Tarsus a more Islamic tradition, although both Christians and Muslims have, at times,

⁴³ C. ALLIONE: <http://www.mystictv.org/habiba.htm> full film, retrieved 15 November, 2008.

⁴⁴ Spivak has suggested that a subaltern voice with enough access to discourse to speak, is no longer 'subaltern' by definition. See: G. SPIVAK: 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in C. NELSON and L. GROSSBERG: *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Chicago 1988) 271. In a similar vein, we may ask whether a popular religiosity that has developed its own theology is any longer popular religion, as such.

attended both sacred sites. Alongside these, we have the importance of natural metaphors and rituals in the spirituality and religiosity of Turkic peoples which do not always coincide with any official sacred building, or only partially. Turkey and Central Asia abound with shrines that have sacred trees for hanging petition-strings, sacred stones and some sacred bodies of water such as the shrine of the biblical and koranic prophet Abraham, in Urfa. A variety of sacred and highly venerated stones are found throughout Turkey and the formerly Ottoman lands, including stones with large holes and stones made into columns or inscribed with sacred words.⁴⁵

This can be seen as just one strain of Anatolian spirituality, if we add to it the surviving pre-Christian layers that have been maintained by the Greeks who resided in Turkey in large numbers until the time of the Republic. In addition to this, one cannot forget the reality of Sufi and Neo-Platonic thought, strains of which focus on the Divine Imminence. While I would not put such a strand forward as having a direct cause-effect relationship with the practices under scrutiny, it is one discourse in the mixture. And, of course, even the most mainstream strands of Christianity and Islam have a theology of the sacredness of matter, nature and place as seen in pilgrimage, sacrament and water ablution amongst other examples. The role of nature in the spiritualities of Asia Minor is potentially a vast subject touching on every form of religiosity there present.

Perhaps a few examples of both secular and more creed-based sites that are natural in focus would be helpful: In the Anatolian city of Bursa there is a bath said to be inhabited by *peris*, creatures known by a variety of descriptions but sometimes said to be comparable to the European 'fairies' in a more Persianate cultural context. This bath seems to have been a place of healing that is entirely outside of any particular religious ritual. The daughter of a British Consul wrote in the early 20th Century about such a bath where these spirits were said to offer healing. In her memoir, a woman with rheumatism goes to the baths for the purpose of sleeping overnight, as was historically practiced in the Greek speaking world, from Pre-Christian times. In the case cited, she

⁴⁵ HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 179-220.

goes to sleep, feels the presence of the *peris* and then is awoken by having water splashed on her. She goes towards the doors as the *peris* depart and, being met by her friends, discovers that she is healed. After, a sheep is sacrificed in gratitude and in all this ritual activity, no particular creed, ecclesiastical rite or Islamic formula appears to be invoked but rather a kind of Ur-ritual that would have been familiar to anyone of the Greek-Turkish-Anatolian cultural and religious milieu. The invocation of spirits (in some Greek rituals they are named *Nereids* rather than *Peris*, recalling pre-Christian Greece), incubation, sacred baths and the offering of animal sacrifice are all entirely fitting in such a natural ritual space and have roots deep into antiquity, without necessitating any particular religious affiliation. Such rituals are themselves not necessarily tied to any one tradition in the Near East, strictly speaking. Indeed, according to Hasluck, practices such as animal sacrifice (*kurban*) are not only Muslim tradition but Orthodox priests have also been known to engage in animal sacrifice/blessing of animal sacrifices, even in modern day Turkey, as reported by an article in the Independent (London) on the Armenian Church of the Holy Archangels.⁴⁶

So, the more neutral 'secular' spaces are yet one more manifestation of the more open ground of ritual space that is neither exclusively Christian nor Muslim. They are however, not the only co-participation grounds. There is also our second group of those sites which are both natural in focus but which offer less neutral ritual observance, hosting more formal rites. Similar examples would include the Caves of the Seven Sleepers found in Ephesus, Tarsus and in a myriad of other locations around the world, based on local narratives. Without taking too steep a diversion, it is important to have a sense of why the story of the Seven Sleepers is a consistent element of sacred natural topography in most places where Islam has been established: The Koran's 18th Surah is named 'the Cave' (*al-Kahf* in Arabic) and, while it discusses a number of subjects, verses 9-21 specifically deal with a group of young men who lay in a mysterious sleep for hundreds of years with their dog-guardian during a time of the persecution of monotheists, after publicly declaring the dangerous

⁴⁶ HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 80.

fact that they eschewed all deities besides the one God. They were also said to have awoken from their sleep at one point, in order to know the miraculous amount of time that they had been asleep.⁴⁷ This Surah is said to be very powerful when read on Friday before congregational prayer with a number of benefits, including keeping the *Dajjal* (a figure similar to the Anti-Christ) at bay and bringing immense blessing on the reciter.⁴⁸

Assuming, as is traditional, that these young men are the same as the Seven Sleepers of Christian hagiography, there seems to be more importance for the story in Islam than in the Christian cult of saints. Whereas the oral tradition of the Seven Sleepers is the basis for an Eastern Orthodox devotion of minor importance (said, among the Greeks, to be helpful for insomniacs⁴⁹), the story of the youths of the cave is enshrined in the revealed text itself, for Muslims.

This particular strain of narrative and ritual is important because it is a key example of the natural environment as a context into which much sacred meaning can be poured by Christians and Muslims, among others, and which often results in a fusion or co-existence of cults in one location. Caves are among the natural phenomena that draw inter-religious devotion with a basis in formal religious observance and mainly around the story of the ‘Seven Sleepers’.⁵⁰ Similarly revered caves, believed to have been the miraculous resting place of the youths, have been canonised in many places. These include caves near Damascus, Amman, Toledo and M’Gaouse in Algeria, in addition to the examples at Ephesus and Tarsus in the Anatolian context.⁵¹ I have myself witnessed in the Lesotho speaking area of South Africa, the way in which a variety of African traditional religions, with varying levels of Christian and traditional doctrines, can happily coexist in a multi-

⁴⁷ L. BAKHTIAR (tran.): *The Sublime Koran*, 18:9-26 (Chicago 2007) 337-340.

⁴⁸ D. DEWEESE: *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tukles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park 1994) 288-289.

⁴⁹ HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 316.

⁵⁰ The Koranic text does not specifically name seven youths. The term ‘Seven Sleepers’ is from Christian hagiography.

⁵¹ HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 316.

ritualised environment, particularly in a natural and open setting and particularly at sacred caves, like ritual canvases upon which various forms of sacrality can transform into spatial practice, simultaneously, upon a natural *tabula rasa*, open to a variety of simultaneous ritualisations.

Ora Limor, professor of the Open University of Israel, also holds that these more open-air and natural environments have often been the most suited to the development of shared pilgrimages. In this respect she invokes the ancient example of a festival (chronicled by church historian Sozomenus) at Mamre in Palestine, which was held in honour of Abraham's meeting with the angels in a field and drew Christians, Jews and 'pagans'.⁵²

In the Turkic world, caves and trees are a few of the many natural phenomena that are held sacred. Other examples include the stag, animals associated with particular saints, wells and sacred stones. Thierry Zarcone has done a very interesting piece of work which gives some more detail about this surviving element of Turkish and Central Asian religion which is often identified as 'shamanic'.⁵³ But on a wider scale, natural phenomena and sanctified humans are fundamental to the building of the 'sacred' and the sacred building in many different settings. In contrast to the predictable view that emphasis on the natural environment is somehow a 'pagan' or 'primitive' strand within a tradition, here I would say that trees, caves, stones, bodies of water are in fact the significant building blocks of ritual spaces, without which most traditions cannot maintain a symbolic system. Whether closely connected to official religious bodies and texts, as in Jerusalem, Mecca or in small lesser-known cults of an ambiguous nature, baths inhabited by *peris* or trees held sacred by Central Asians, all are the building blocks of ritual, what varies is the discourse within the practice takes place. The revering of a stone in rural Anatolia by Alevi-Bektashis is classified as entirely different, by many, from the revering of the stone of the Kaaba in Mecca, on hajj or

⁵² O. LIMOR: 'Sharing Sacred Space: Holy Places in Jerusalem Between Christianity, Judaism and Islam', in I. SHAGRIR *In Laudem Hierosolymitani: Studies in Crusades and Medieval Culture in Honour of Benjamin Z. Kedar* (Aldershot 2007) 219-232.

⁵³ T. ZARCONI: 'Stone People, Tree People and Animal People in Turkic Asia and Eastern Europe', in *Diogenes* 207 (2005) 35-46.

umra. The difference between what is labelled 'pagan', 'folk religious' etc... comes down to the attribution of meaning and by whom it is attributed. In Ephesus, all of these elements (official, unofficial, Muslim, Christian, ancient, recent) come together.

Holy Persons (deceased)

In this category we find what are commonly called saints in the English language. Holy men and women are most definitely not limited to the Christian churches that have formal processes of canonisation and public veneration. Even the more aniconic traditions such as Judaism and Islam have places in which (sometimes controversially) holy men, women and prophets are venerated.

Often, in the case of Jews and Muslims, the place of veneration for a holy person is their burial place because both Islamic and Jewish law prohibit altering the body's integrity after death, such as creating relics of various body parts and distributing the relics over long distances to various churches and shrines.⁵⁴ For that reason, a Sufi shrine, for example, will tend to be in one location (a grave), whereas a Christian shrine will sometimes contain only a part of the relics of a given saint.

The tombs and relics of holy men and women seem to make up the largest numbers of holy places that attract the veneration of communities outside of the saint's own tradition. This very widespread practice can be observed as still very much alive in the Indian Subcontinent and was also widely practiced in the Ottoman Empire before the coming of the Turkish Republic and the Exchange of Populations (between Greece and Turkey, of their respective Christian and Muslim minorities). A great variety of examples in various formations have existed in both worlds, from small chapels to large pilgrimage sites.

Among the many historical examples of this in Asia Minor is the *Ziyaret Kilisesi* ('Pilgrimage Church' in Turkish) within the Mamasun Tekke (dervish centre) which was one of the spaces that had most tightly held two communities in one space, reflecting, in some ways, the *simultanea* of the modern West where Catholic and

⁵⁴ As with anything, there are exceptions to this. The head of Imam Hussein is said to be in competing sites. As a martyr, his body is not believed to have been left intact.

Protestant churches are often shared with only slight physical alteration depending on which church community is using it at a given time.⁵⁵ In the case of the 'Pilgrimage Church' in Cappadocia (modern Turkey), both Muslims and Christians have made pilgrimages to the dervish centre (*Tekke*) where they have venerated the Greek Saint Mamas. According to traditional narratives⁵⁶ the church first had been both an outhouse and a barn but was besieged by a series of catastrophes. The hay in the barn was regularly said to catch on fire for no apparent reason and, when it was transformed into a stable, the horses placed there consistently died. After these incidents, the Turkish owner began to excavate the grounds believing that a sorcerer's talisman of some kind must have been placed there. Instead he found what he and others came to believe were relics of St. Mamas and the ruins of his church. The church then developed a long history of double-patronage. For our purposes it is very interesting that the space was for many years shared informally in a divided but overlapping style. So, the sanctuary had both a *mihrab* indicating the appropriate direction to face for Islamic prayer and an altar for visiting Christian clergy to celebrate the liturgy. Both Armenian and Greeks were historical patrons of the shrine and so the church space was itself also ecumenical at the level of Christian communities. The relics themselves are still in a box inscribed in the Armenian language.⁵⁷ This is one of the fairly typical examples, in Hasluck's exhaustive survey, of the way in which a basic common sacrality is recognised by two communities but shared via two distinct forms of praxis. According to Hasluck, the Christians and Muslims have gathered in the space without partition but there is a compromise on the issue of iconography and it is permitted for the Muslims to turn the icon around away from Muslim congregants during their prayer. However, it appears that, as the non-Muslim population has decreased, the Islamisation of the space has increased so that, by the writing of Hasluck's work in 1916, there was very little Christian presence in the shrine.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 43.

⁵⁶ HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 43-47.

⁵⁷ HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 43-47.

⁵⁸ HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 45.

That, however, is not as relevant as the process whereby both congregations gathered around the memory and presence of Saint Mamas before the political shifts of the 19th and 20th centuries in Turkey. In this case, previous to the Christian absence, one sees several layers of interaction. First, as mentioned, there is the common recognition of the immediate sacrality of the space, encountered by the pilgrim of any religion. Pilgrims come seeking the benefit of healings and the hearing of petitions by the saint there enshrined. Because both Muslims and Christians report receiving miracles and cures, a kind of practical and pragmatic universalism comes into the shrine culture. People of various religions are equally seen to be receiving the graces of the holy person whose relics are there entombed or enshrined. This then, in turn, overflows into a further influx of pilgrims from both communities by logical extension. Following on from that stage, we see the process of negotiation of space, as will be further discussed.

Holy Persons (living)

Saintly persons and persons believed to be invested with divine power need not be dead in order to attract a multi-creedal following of some kind, as seen in the contemporary case of Father Makari Younon, an exorcist and healer in Cairo. This tendency is still very present in many places, although less so than in the Ottoman period. Historically, there has been a tendency very parallel to what is seen in the shrines of deceased saints. In this pattern, particularly in moments of acute need, some will resort to whatever remedy is seen to be the most efficacious, not the one that is seen to be theologically or communally acceptable, necessarily. However, that is simply one angle. I don't suggest here that in all cases, tolerant semi-syncretism and inter-rituality are somehow alien until resorted to in extreme cases. Instead, I mean to suggest that this seems to be one scenario in which a believer will reach outside his tradition and (only *possibly*) outside the norms of her or his community in times of need.

On the other hand, it can be argued that this very practice demands a kind of implicit universalism, particularly in the case of Christians who have no inherent link in their revelation to indicate

a value in Muslim ritual, for example. While on the other hand, the Koran's recognition of Jesus and his status as a miracle worker seems to be capable of giving a sort of permission for the Muslim believer to seek the guidance of those who invoke the name of Jesus, however much such a Muslim believer may object to some of the associated doctrines and symbols of a Christian rite. Most likely, there is a great deal of variation in how consciously universalist a particular petitioner is and to what degree she or he would even consider such questions relevant. In practice, the way in which belief, universalism and the drawing upon tradition and religious identity plays into shared pilgrimage varies widely. That will become clearer as we proceed empirically.

In Hasluck's work, written in the twilight days of the Ottoman Empire, we see this phenomenon as clearly as in modern day Cairo with Father Makari. According to Hasluck, a basic belief in the efficacy of the rituals of a priest, imam or sheikh is common amongst some members of all the communities of the Levant, just as there has been a common belief in the efficacy of any saint or holy place, regardless of affiliation.⁵⁹ This is, however, not totally unproblematic nor totally universal.

Again, similarly, there seems to be a highly pragmatic approach taken by petitioners. In particular Hasluck mentions the example of a work of literature written by a Greek of Istanbul by the name of Basileiadou which describes the story of a mother with a very sick child. In desperation, she went on every recommended Christian pilgrimage in Anatolia that she was capable of making. When none of this was effectual, a Christian neighbour (no less) tells her to go to the shrine of Eyup Sultan for the purposes of having a learned *hojarecite* the Koran over her daughter. Sadly, the daughter did not become well and a number of condemnations were directed at the mother (who eventually went mad) including the fact that she was warned by her confessor not to go to the *hoja*.⁶⁰

Here we see a juxtaposition of several themes converging in the narrative. First, interestingly, we have two somewhat officially opposed holy men. The woman's confessor forbids her to go to the Eyup Sultan shrine to see another living (competing) spiritual

⁵⁹ HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, ch. 6.

⁶⁰ HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 78-80.

authority. When, however, the mother and child go to the shrine to have the Koran 'read over' the child, the daughter dies and the mother goes mad, inviting the criticism of the community.

This anecdote carries precisely the tension that gives some insight into the world of inter-rituality. At the first level, the sacred living person, the *hoja*, is invested with divine power, de facto, by the visit of the desperate mother. While there is no indication of an absolute faith in the *hoja*, there is at least an assent to the possibility that as administrator of a powerful Muslim shrine and as an adept in the arts of healing and exorcism, the *hoja* may be more effective than the saints invoked at churches. Were this not the case, even in a moment of absolute despair there would be no reliance on something considered ineffectual. Furthermore, by the suggestion coming from a fellow Christian, there is an indication that perhaps the efficaciousness of a visit to the *hoja* at the shrine formed part of the Christian context in Turkey, at that time.

And yet, not surprisingly, the practice is fairly grassroots and not officially a part of clerical practice (although there are instances in which even clergy in the Ottoman world were known to seek blessings from the holy persons, places, objects and rites of another creed). The priest counsels against the visit to Eyup Sultan and when all goes badly for the mother and child, fellow Christians go so far as to condemn her for a number of reasons including engaging in magic (Turkish rituals are 'magic') and pre-empting the ability for the saints to help by going to the 'devil' while the saints were still doing their work based on her petitions during the initial Christian pilgrimage.⁶¹

Clearly the unfortunate case drew out a number of conflicting forms of discourse within the Greek community, which I would classify into the two camps of pragmatic universalism versus an official doctrine of exclusivity. While we could loosely assign the pragmatism to the lay people of the story and the exclusivity to the Greek priest, that would not be a generalisation that would function well in all circumstances, even in the time and place of this example. A variety of people condemned the mother, besides the clergy and in other circumstances even clergy have visited holy people and places outside of their own religious context when need

⁶¹ HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 79-80.

required. In another Greek story, a folk tale, a priest took his own wife to be 'read over' by a Turk who was believed to have the power of removing the spell which had been placed on her.⁶² It seems that, again, the urgency of a need is a highly influential factor in how pragmatically universalist or exclusive a given believer will be, circumstances being highly influential in the visitation of a living holy man or woman.

Narrative-Sanctified Locations

The House of the Virgin Mary in Ephesus exemplifies the sacred place that is, in a certain sense, empty. That is, it is not a place where living or deceased holy beings are resident, as much as a place sanctified by their presence and the events which have taken place in the environs. This is true of many of the most famous and most contested holy places of the three Abrahamic traditions as found in Jerusalem. The Dome of the Rock and *Al-Aqsa* mosque, for example, are places which are constructed in memory of sacred history that has taken place there, specifically, climactic moments in the lives of the prophets Abraham and Muhammed. What remains are stones upon which sacred acts took place and in the Western Wall we see the outer shell of a site where especially holy ritual acts were said to have taken place. All of these are indications and a pointing back to events and persons but are not themselves direct relics of the sacred persons and objects that make them significant. This category is inclusive of most but not all the sites of interest here to some degree and so it need not be dealt with in a great deal of detail, except to say that while some sites may be invested with a kind of inherent power, such as many natural sites, most draw their sanctity from events in which divinity or holy persons have been actors on the location.

All locations hallowed by acts, persons and historical narratives share in common the fact they are living and breathing spaces now and can thus take on a variety of meanings under changing circumstances. Kim Knott has made the important observation, following on De Certeau, that all space is modified

⁶² HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 78.

and even subverted by those who inhabit it.⁶³ In this vein, it is interesting that this can be seen to be happening from the ancient, rarefied and sanctified time of the past that is the historical memory of the site. Yet, at the same time, there is a constant shifting and re-shifting of space and its employment of the subjective beings that, for whatever period of time, take up residence there. Those who enter the House of the Virgin Mary (*Meryem Ana Evi*, Turkish) inevitably change it through the ideological and religious paradigms they bring and the way that their paradigms manifest in formal rituality and unconscious acts.

Basic Sacral Micro-Spaces

This genre of shared site is generally small and can be found almost anywhere. Ritual need not be restricted to large spaces or edifices. Notably, Kim Knott has made this point in her work on the space of the left hand in 'The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis'. Micro-space is inhabited by ideology, theology, religious praxis and therefore, undoubtedly, both ritual and the co-rituality of our study. This co-rituality emerges through shared gestures, shared utilisation of objects, shared physical movements much of which is also grounded in a shared folk-magic, as seen at all levels of co-religious manifestation whether in churches, saint's tombs or caves.

For example, the practice of tying strings is extremely widespread and cannot be linked to one particularly genealogy, from the Jewish shrine of Rachel's Tomb, in which the strings are taken away with the pilgrim (for protection from the evil eye) to Ephesus or Delhi's shrine of Nizamuddin Auliya where devotees leave the strings and rags tied to the shrine as a form of petition. Hasluck points out that in the Near East, Muslims and Christians held in common a number of such practices. He mentions the ritual use of nails, contact with relics, animal sacrifice, offering votive candles and 'reading over' pilgrims from the text of a holy book. Among the more dramatic examples are those which involve children. Both dervishes of the Rifai order and Orthodox Christians ceremonially walk over children who are ill and both Shia Muslims

⁶³ K. KNOTT: *The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis* (London 2005) 26-27.

and Orthodox Christians are known to ceremonially 'sell' children to a saint who is being petitioned on the child's behalf.⁶⁴ Such practices belong in a particular category because they are clearly meetings within a certain ritual and material space that is parallel but one which cannot be localised at precisely the same moment in the same place. They share a space purely through the essential practice as it is repeated by peoples who are not necessarily in physical proximity, as they would be, for example, in the Convent of Seidnaya outside of Damascus. The folk ritual locations are in a sense sometimes peripatetic as shared spaces. The tying of strings can take up its inter-religious, basic sacral spatial practice anywhere and is easily transferred due to its non-religion specific simplicity.

Sacred fountains can be found, with different meanings attributed to them, at both Muslim and Christian sites, for example. In Istanbul there is as much devotion to water flowing from the fountain in a prominent Sufi lodge found near the famed Fatih mosque as there is for the *ayazma* (fountain) in a Greek Orthodox church some few kilometres away. Further afield, Nugteren mentions the shared but differing meanings attributed to flowers in South Asia amongst both Hindus and Muslims, for whom the falling of a flower has certain meanings at a sacred location.⁶⁵ Nugteren further cites the common reverence for trees at both Buddhist Stupas and Sufi shrines in the subcontinent, as described in the work of N. N. Bhattacharya on Indian Ritual.⁶⁶

To what degree any of these examples is more popular or orthodox in orientation is debatable and likely all of the examples could be placed along a spectrum from the more acceptable in the orthodox institutional context of a given religious tradition to the more inter-religious and fluid sort of practice that cannot be placed within or appropriated by a formal hierarchy. The most important element, however, is that amongst the sites of shared pilgrimage, there is a subset of forms that expresses itself easily through small

⁶⁴ HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 80-81.

⁶⁵ A. NUGTEREN: *Belief, Bounty and Beauty: Rituals Around Sacred Trees in India* (Leiden 2005) 308.

⁶⁶ N.N. BHATTACHARYYA: *Ancient Indian Rituals and Their Social Contents* (London 1975) 117-18, cited in NUGTEREN: *Belief, Bounty and Beauty* (Leiden 2005) 308.

objects and natural elements, which can easily be transferred between sites, adopted or shared. These are things as basic as strings, containers of water and flowers, small and mutable shared spaces.

Festivals – Temporal Space

Again, examples of this form of space sharing are numerous and one can think, in particular, of the Muslim-Coptic *maulids* or the convergence of Muslim and Christian believers onto the sites associated with the Holy Family's descent into Egypt during the festivals of the Church which witness to the sacred history of the pilgrimage trail. Otto Meinardus has described these traditions at length and documented both the Islamic and Christian narratives upon which the pilgrimage is built.⁶⁷

Much of the same could be said of this practice as has been said of the previous phenomena with the caveat that in pilgrimage there may sometimes (but not always) be less focus on the urgent needs of the petitioners. That is to say that the accent is on coming together in recognition of both physical sacred place as a *lieux de mémoire* and a convergence within the *temporal* sacred space, the days and nights which are, in some way shared as sacred locations for the two or more communities who hold in reverence the same past events and communally sanctified memories. As in the above cases, examples are numerous.

Synthesis

In order to have a sense of this unfamiliar terrain in the world of sacred spatiality and ritual, a broad vision is necessary. Inter-religious ritual is a common practice and yet for our purposes there is a particular role for the understanding of such ritual practice in the Islamic world and Islamicate cultural ambits. Within that context, inter-rituality appears in a multiplicity of forms but in particular we see it gathered around and in things

⁶⁷ O. MEINARDUS: *The Holy Family in Egypt*, <http://www.coptic.net/articles/HolyFamilyInEgypt.txt>, retrieved 24 October, 2008.

and people considered to have spiritual power. Such centres of power are numerous but often include holy persons, living and dead, natural sites of inherent significance and natural sites of significance through religious association. Included also are sites of sacredness on a micro level of gesture, object and act and those places which are not so much objects of power themselves but are, in a shell-like fashion, touched by their former proximity to divine power or sanctified in time or festival. In this great variety of locations there is a consistent theme of overlapping devotion, of a space in which humans identified with ostensibly different religious traditions feel compelled (for a variety of potentially divinable reasons) to offer prayer and ritual alongside those of an entirely different religious self-definition (or, perhaps better, communally defined identity). Because of the very fact that this strikes many as strange or noteworthy and remains to some degree an assumption in other societies, there is a paradox worth pursuing through a genealogy of history, ritual and theoretical contextualisation.

Models of Inter-Religious Cult-Space: Ways of Relating

In order to enter into the more social ramifications of multi-ritual spaces, we have to be capable of seeing not only the ecumenical and universalist potential of these places, but also the precariously ambiguous and sometimes overtly hostile atmospheres that are sometimes generated by these sacred locations.

Hospitality

In the hospitality model of religiously ambiguous sanctuaries, one or both communities in some way host or make space for the other. They may do this through providing an actual space (as in Ephesus) or by accepting the practice of another community's ritual within the precincts of their sanctuary (Convent of Seidnaya, Damascus).

This approach has parallels and influences in the Abrahamic context from the general Abrahamic and Near Eastern ethic of hospitality, which will be discussed further. Temporarily it suffices

to say that one paradigm through which we can view the sharing of spaces is through hospitality as one of the values that encourages not only communities to host one another with a degree of benevolence socially, but also in ritual environments, when this value is highlighted. I would place forward the view that this is most commonly found when there is a degree of political stasis, even if that stability is a product of clear domination by one community. The *millet* system of Ottoman Turkey and the laws of Moghul India, for example, constructed a space in which the ruling class was Muslim and the legal system Islamic but which allowed for the practice of other religions in their own self-governing space that operated under the auspices of the greater Islamic power structure.⁶⁸ This is not to say that such a system is necessarily extreme in its tolerance or without problems. Tolerance is not so much the point, in fact. Rather, the question is one of the necessary balance of power in which ritual can flourish. It seems that what successful hosting of the other in a religious space requires is a basic sense of safety and rights, not necessarily equality.

Hospitality is a reception of the other with the general assumption (but not guarantee) that the other does not pose a significant danger. It is also basic to any notion of hospitality that the host does not act aggressively towards the guest. So, looking at the story put forward by the Greek writer Basileiadou of the sick young girl who was taken to the shrine of Eyup Sultan, we also see that the Greeks who advised the woman in the story to visit the shrine must have experienced the sacred site as one that welcomed without missionary intent. In a similar vein, Muslims coming to Seidnaya would presumably not feel their own identity threatened by the advances of Christian proselytism and that must largely be the case in most shrines previously mentioned. This, however, must come along with the caveat that one cannot have any guarantees about the general intention of all those in a given *temenos* because it has been observed by Hasluck, amongst many other writers on the subject, that resorting to the religious power of

⁶⁸ P. SUGAR: *Southeastern Europe Under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804* (Washington 1996) 3-23 and J. BENTHALL: 'Confessional Cousins and the Rest: The Structure of Islamic Toleration', in *Anthropology Today* 21:1 (2005) 16-20.

a shrine belonging to another tradition is often done in a state of desperation (as in the story of Basileiadou). A space need not be perfectly hospitable, presumably, for a person in great need to resort to it.

Amicable Division

In this case there is a general lack of hostility (some exceptions might exist on occasion) and a dividing up of the space in question. For an example of this, see the shrine of the Prophet Daniel in Susa. Here you have a convergence of architectural construction and religious communities with clearly marked and maintained boundaries, carved from the same *locus*.

The division of space and ritual used here is often well established, if it is functioning. Often the two or three communities are happily observing their own rites at the site but in somewhat separate spaces as in the case of Kataragama where the Muslim community gathers in its own mosque to honour Khidr without images, while Hindus and Buddhists carry on their *pujas* in the same sacred environs but using an alternative space. However, part of the division that has been agreed also creates a certain colour and diversity, even adding elements to a ritual practice. Again speaking of Kataragama, while much of the local ritual is focused on the Hindu *pujas*, with its elaborate and highly sensory form, the pilgrimage procession begins and ends at the Kataragama mosque.⁶⁹ This is a very interesting contrast to other shrines which are less peacefully divided, because in this case, the three communities actually ritualise the location's multi-religious identity, something unique even amongst very stable inter-religious shrines.

Chaotic/Spontaneous Overlap

This is very commonly the beginning stage in a variety of cases (according to Hasluck) and in some cases this is the model that appears to continue indefinitely. The Armenian church of the

⁶⁹ Sunday Observer, Sri Lanka:
<http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2003/08/10/fea01.html>, retrieved 19
 November, 2008.

Holy Archangels in Istanbul is one such example in which a Muslim following has developed around a church and carried on historically in the same largely un-directed way, as earlier mentioned. There does not appear to be a separate space for the Muslim pilgrim nor any significant planning around the presence of Non-Christians in the church besides, as mentioned, that priests in the church were seen to hand out prayer rugs and prayer beads to Muslim visitors. This is, while informal, a ritualisation and acknowledgement of an Islamic presence within the church. Because, to the best of my knowledge this is not done in a formal, ceremonious way, the ritual overlap in the space fits within the category of the more spontaneous and free-flowing co-veneration which has consistently developed around such sites throughout the history of Anatolia. The tendency has been toward an unprogrammed expression of devotion towards the sacred, by a Muslim or Non-Muslim recognising the sanctity of a person or place outside her or his official identification. Not surprisingly, such human activity is often beyond any particular calculated and pre-meditated ceremonialisation, being a very living and spontaneous reaction to a sense of the numinous.

Antagonistic Tolerance

This category includes locations which may appear outwardly to be multi-religious and to have a successful harmonisation of cults, but which have a sometimes unperceived underlying antagonism. This is seen most clearly when said communities enter into a period of conflict over contractual or informal agreements made in the past, often when tensions are otherwise enflamed. This is currently the case in many parts of India. In fact, Robert Hayden, to whom I owe the use of this term, has focused his explanation of antagonistic tolerance on places of worship in India and the Balkans. South Asia is particularly interesting for many.

Hayden seeks to set forward an alternative to the common discourse of tolerance around religious co-existence as manifested in places where multiple places of worship are found together in close proximity or where there is a sharing of spaces. Hayden opts for

‘...the argument of Max Weber and Tzvetan Todorov for the superiority of an “ethics of responsibility” over an “ethics of conviction,” concluding that scholarly ethics require reporting research findings that are contrary to that which many would prefer to be true.’⁷⁰

Hayden comes to the conclusion that intellectual honesty requires scrutiny of many locations and societies which are often put forward as having exemplified a highly tolerant merging of religious traditions as demonstrated on a very physical, immediate level. He makes an argument which will become more relevant at a later stage but which we can at least briefly summarise here.

Having established that the motivation is it to go beyond the natural tendency to seek out examples of co-existence, Hayden shows that these holy places often have a strong element of competition such as is becoming increasingly clear in India as the Hindu right wing which has begun claiming previously bi-religious shrines (Muslim-Hindu) as essentially Hindu places of worship after centuries of seeming co-existence within the *dargahs* of these Sufi saints. Hayden says that we have overlooked not only the possibility that closely interconnected rituals may go on even while there is competition but also that our concept of tolerance is at times unclear because many do not make a distinction between passive tolerance and a more actively accepting definition of tolerance. Hayden roughly parallels these two views to those of philosophers Locke and Mills, respectively, noting that most modern liberal thinkers opt for the more actively embracing definition of Mills.⁷¹

Because of the Millian definition that tends to colour Western epistemic lenses, it is easy to assume that a movement such as that of the Hindu right simply triggers off a novel conflict in an otherwise peaceful shrine. There has even been a tendency to ascribe all conflict to the changes of the colonial era. Hayden, however, believes that such a conclusion is an assumption that the previous tolerance was not already competitive or antagonistic. He puts forward the notion that such an assumption distorts and

⁷⁰ HAYDEN: ‘Antagonistic Tolerance’, 205.

⁷¹ HAYDEN: ‘Antagonistic Tolerance’, 205.

romanticises the history of places such as South Asia and the Balkans. For the purposes of this project it is important to keep in mind this perspective, not so much as an overarching meta-assumption to be brought to all the examples but as a factor to look for and one angle through which to view consecrated spaces. Hayden's examples are indeed ones that empirically show a level of antagonism even in what appear to be peaceful co-management of multi-religious shrines.

Hostile Division

These examples are very well known and include places such as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. A lesser well known but perhaps even more illustrative example is the shrine of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Ibrahim, Isaak, Yakub) and their families at Hebron, which is one of the most tense multi-religious sites in the world, particularly after the 1994 massacre by Jewish settler Baruch Goldstein. In these cases, we look for a ritual separation that shows evidence of a division intended to keep the space from falling into violent conflict. Some obvious indicators might be the presence of armed forces on the premises, a wider conflict that is represented at the sacred site by the two or more parties praying in the location and, of course, a history of acts of sectarian violence inside or in the vicinity of the shrine. As stated, such examples are particularly noticeable in more contested areas of Israel/Palestine. This is the form of inter-religious ritual space that often appears in media coverage.

Transfer

Besides hostile division and tense toleration, there is also the phenomenon of transfer (appropriation and re-appropriation) which can sometimes be overtly hostile and at other times simply a result of factors such as the shifting of populations, which may have a violent context but one not directly connected to the space itself. This is currently being seen in its more hostile form in India, with right wing Hindu appropriation of Muslim shrines, sometimes by force, as in the study of Robert Hayden who looks at the case of Shah Ramzan/Sri Kanobah sanctuary.⁷² In the other form, it has

⁷² HAYDEN: 'Antagonistic Tolerance', 208.

also happened inadvertently (or due to non-ritual issues) as a particular community has disappeared, as in the case of Iraqi Jews who no longer maintain a presence at the tombs of Ezekiel or Ezra.

In whatever way it takes place, transference is a loaded issue and often associated with the taking of holy places by the Roman Catholic Church or the Muslim communities, with the victims often seen to be less powerful groups of Eastern Christians, for example. This is, however, not a stereotype that is consistent. The reality is that appropriation often happens at the hands of those who are more powerful or numerous, whoever they may be in the particular setting. The Tomb of the Virgin Mary, outside Jerusalem is now in the hands of the Orthodox Churches, no longer has an official *Waqf* representing the Muslim community and has left the hands of the Franciscans who once had rights there.⁷³ This, then, is an exception to common assumptions about typical power dynamics in the appropriation process.

Hasluck describes the typical transference process from Christian to Muslim hands as being fairly peaceful and quiet claiming that the transference from Muslim to Christian sanctuary is entirely different because mosques, in places such as post-independence Greece, were often secularised.⁷⁴ There are, of course, exceptions. The process from Christian to Muslim hands, according to Hasluck, first involves, often, miracles and prayers answered for Muslims who then recognise the sanctity of the site on a practical basis. In some cases the saint is identified with a Muslim figure in some way (St. George becomes Khidr, often, for example. Saint Nicholas becomes Sari Saltuk).⁷⁵ Then, a number of things may take place such as the thinning of the local Christian population, which leads to a transference of the sanctuary to the Muslim community.⁷⁶ In a

⁷³ S. SHOEMAKER: *The Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford 2002) 78-106 for an overview of the Palestinian cult of the Virgin Mary and Mary's Tomb. For the perspective of the Franciscans: <http://198.62.75.1/www1/ofm/san/TSmary0.html> (retrieved February 7, 2011).

⁷⁴ HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 88.

⁷⁵ H. S. HADAD: "'Georgic' Cults and Saints of the Levant', in *Numen: International Review for the History of Religions* (1969) 21-39.

⁷⁶ HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 58-59.

Jewish-Muslim context, this is precisely what has happened with the Iraqi shrines previously mentioned.

Hostile takeover is of course also possible and does occur. Hayden's model is interesting because it is a scholarly reminder of the importance of deep contextualisation. When looking for competition, antagonistic tolerance, or a more peaceful motivation in the unfolding of ritualisation and ownership within a space, a good deal more context is needed than knowledge of the physical space. What may appear to be hostile takeover may be abandonment and what appears to be coexistence may be a process in which one community is attempting to slowly dominate the other.

What certainly remains clear is that placing one inter-ritual shrine in context needs a wide view that keeps in mind the diversity of possibilities that emerge when members of more than one religious tradition recognise the sanctity of a common person, place or object. So diverse are the manifestations of human behaviour and organisation that an inter-religious shrine can become the axis of ceremonialised demonstrations of coexistence and universalism or sites of massacre and international conflict, macabre pawns in the outplaying of ancient grudges. Most, however, inhabit a degree along the spectrum that exists between these extremes and it is this fact that makes the richest contribution to our understanding.

Chapter 2

Key Concepts



Key Concepts

To further focus the analysis, some categorisations of the phenomena that arise in sacred spaces of religious simultaneity are helpful and truly essential as routes of approach to the topic. Most are very much inherent in the simple question of what mixed pilgrimage is and how it manifests and is housed in the space of Ephesus. It should quite naturally follow on that in order to understand religious convergence we must first have a sense of

what we understand by the term religion. Here we will also develop the concept from one of religion to religiosity as a particular formulation that is useful to us. From there we will look at space and ritual as important elements of religiosity, moving on to the concept of syncretism as a convergence of rituals and religions in space. Similarly, hospitality is an important element of converging and co-hosted ritual activity, from a very informal to an official level. In almost all these subjects, two approaches will be notably repeated: First, I will work with somewhat essentialising terminology in a way that is inherently aware of the limitations in said lexicon and will substitute other more appropriate terms where necessary, for clarification, often beginning with the traditional terms (religion, syncretism...) and work from there to a more open view of the phenomena under consideration and modifying the language.

Secondly, because of the subject matters own context, I try to go beyond the general tendency to only draw on the intellectual voices of the cultural/geographic 'North', that is to say the scholars from the Anglo-Saxon and European dominant powers such as French, German and American thinkers. Precisely because of the nature of the topic, it is of interest to look at these voices which have become more central since the advent of Subaltern Studies in South Asia and a general shift towards finding the lost (or never heard, possibly never articulated) stories of historically colonised or marginalised people. Although this has not yet come to play a large role in the field of Ritual Studies, it is an element in the work of Kim Knott, who draws on the thought of Dipesh Chakrabarty. The concept of the hybrid, as used by Homi Bhabha will also be invoked. Outside of that particular field, however, there are other thinkers who, because of their choice to work through 'Western' culture and its academic discourse, can communicate something of what is inaccessible in a less hegemonically powerful cultural world. Such is the case with an anthropologist such as Talal Asad who seeks to reorient the ways in which those from the 'West' and those whose thought is deeply influenced by the 'West' think about religion. As we proceed, other figures that understand cultural and religious liminality are invoked who are Western but not particularly well known in the English-speaking world, such as Louis Massignon. As this study is situated within the field of ritual

studies, it will necessarily reference not only Kim Knott's work but also that of other prominent ritologists, such as Catherine Bell and Ronald Grimes. Knott's focus, however, on religion, ritual and the sacred as realities that are lived and practiced underlies all concepts here explained.

The goal is as follows: to have a background in and working definitions for religion, ritual, space, syncretism and hospitality, as fundamental discursive building blocks for an understanding of the places under consideration and for further new concepts appearing in the field that connect to these more fundamental points. The intention is that religion will be seen as both something formed and crystallised into traditions and institutions but also (and most significantly) as a matter of practiced, grounded and ritualised behaviours, as shown by, amongst others, Kim Knott. These forms of lived spirituality are worked in and through space, which we see as a fluid reality that is contacted and labelled by human consciousness, as illustrated by Henri Lefebvre. The most significant form of spatial practice in this project is that of ritual praxis. Ritual we will deal with as a specially formulated action within the genre of spatial practice, which often (but not always) has religious significance. Syncretism is a term often employed when approaching the subject of ritual contact between different religious lineages within the same space. Here there will be an examination of syncretism as a term that is largely contested but which is still used cautiously by some. I will further examine whether or not syncretism is indeed a major concern in places such as Ephesus and consider whether other concepts might be more helpful. One very important underlying reality of this hosting and mixing of different ritual forms is the practice of hospitality which will be examined via the work of Massignon and Derrida.

A. Religion

No discussion or analysis can begin if there is not some understanding of the fundamental concept of religion and yet getting down to something fundamentally agreed is precisely the difficulty. The Oxford dictionary's definition of religion is, '1. The belief in and worship of a God or gods. 2. A particular system of faith and

worship. 3. A pursuit or interest that is very important to someone'.⁷⁷ But of course, this is only the beginning. Toward the goal of defining religion for the purposes of studying the relatively marginal practices of shared ritual spaces and pilgrimage, it proves useful to first give it some constructive background. Religion is not a term that appears without a history in the English language, tied to a series of discursive lineages and moments of re-formulation. It will also be clear that, in light of the work that has been done on a contemporarily understanding of religion, there is value in adopting from these approaches in creating a working definition. We will therefore look at the work of Danièle Hervieu-Léger and Kim Knott, with the addition of a conceptualisation of religion by the ritologist Ronald Grimes. Having defined religion as a phenomenon that can manifest in both formal and informal modes, we will concentrate on those that represent an outworking of tradition (Hervieu-Léger) in an often marginal way via an examination of space (Knott). Concluding, the conceptual field will include the notion of popular religion (sometimes called 'folk religion'), which is a term often employed and similarly requiring contextualisation.

History and Etymology

Etymologically, many texts explain that the word comes from *religare* or 'bind back' in Latin, a more Christian term often distinguished or compared with *traditio* said to represent an older stream in Western culture deriving from the Roman notion of 'religion/tradition' as a set of inherited observances.⁷⁸ In the Middle Ages the term 'religious' began to be associated largely with religious (monastic) orders and the distinction to be made with 'secular' priests who worked in the world. During the Reformation, Protestant discourse utilised the term 'religion' to make a distinction between religion and superstition, with superstition seen in Roman Catholicism and all that was classified as layering on top of a pure and original Christianity.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ C.SOANES, S.HAWKES (eds): *Compact Oxford English Dictionary for Students*, s.v. 'Religion' (Oxford 2006) 867.

⁷⁸ KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 62-63.

⁷⁹ KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 64-66.

As Early Modern Europe unfolded, a theory of 'Natural Religion' developed, particularly in England, in the years after the Reformation's social process had begun. This based itself in the notion that all people had a religiosity with some certain common traits. Asad, using Herbert's *De Veritate* describes these common traits proposed by Natural Religion as:

'...beliefs (about a supreme power), practices (its ordered worship), and ethics (a code of conduct based on rewards and punishments after this life) – said to exist in all societies. This emphasis on belief meant that henceforth religion could be conceived as a set of propositions to which believers gave assent, and which therefore could be judged and compared as between different religions and as against natural science ...'⁸⁰

These older constructions of religion are challenged by the presence of a number of non-universals, as in the example of 'Natural Religion', which clearly does not take into account a number of major exceptions such as a non-theistic tradition as immense as Buddhism.

From the Enlightenment, religion increasingly began to be identified with belief and individual belief, as it was increasingly relegated to the private sphere.⁸¹ To say that the concept of religion has changed over time, would be a great understatement even when looking at these European examples alone, much less if one were to widen the term to parallels in the Islamic world, indigenous groups or the concept of religion as a function within Chinese Confucian discourses of the state and nuclear family. One could be tempted to say that the word is too large of an umbrella to be successfully wielded at all. In order to begin clarifying how religion will be used within this project, I have drawn on the support of the three theorists on religion and ritual, Knott, Hervieu-Léger and Grimes, in order to shine some light on this contested realm of definition.

⁸⁰ ASAD: *Genealogies of Religion*, 40-41.

⁸¹ ASAD: *Genealogies of Religion*, 45.

Contingent Religion and Contested Definitions

Kim Knott, who is a central thinker for most of these key concepts, has taken a very interesting approach. She says, 'I am eager to see religion as a lighter, avoiding a specific definition in advance, preferring to see how the 'religious' and the 'secular' are used and formed practically and discursively in the various spaces of the left hand.'⁸² In her study of the left hand we have an interesting precedent. This is an example in which the scholar does not so much define religion as observe the ways in which discourses of and about religion are being produced, reproduced, interpreted and changed by the practitioner and her society. This is an innovative and open way of the approaching the subject which we will take advantage of here, working with a general concept of religion but simultaneously assuming that it takes shape variously and has the tendency to escape grasp. Along a similar vein, Knott, commenting on Talal Asad has said:

It seems to be in the very nature of defining religion, however, that the definition, even if it was defined for a specific purpose, should bear the strain of being applicable beyond those circumstances to other times, places, and religions, with the result that it may distort the very things it should make sense of. In order to avoid such misappropriation, we are better off confining ourselves to conceptualising 'religion' (or equivalent categories within other societies or cultures) within the terms of the time and place to be studied, and with due attention to the genealogy of the concept itself.⁸³

Here we enter, yet again, a very tricky area in the definition of religion. Can we define religion for the purposes of just this particular study, keeping our focus highly localised? I believe that, however strange it may seem at the outset, the approach must be one that incorporates both the insights of

⁸² KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 81-82.

⁸³ ASAD: *Genealogies of Religion*, Ch.1 and KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 89.

Knott and Asad. The attitude must be both flexible and focused on the particular, avoiding wider generalisations. But how to do that in a subject that, while focused on one region for fieldwork, encompasses an intersection of peoples, sacred places, ethnicities and religious traditions? Would it perhaps be best to focus at least on one aspect of religious practice? Perhaps a focus on popular religion would be the best suited to this study, which seems to have little connection to the grand rituals found in the seats of centralised orthodox religious practice in Mecca, Medina, Rome or the Patriarchate of Constantinople? Even these clerical centres are constructed from earlier layers of syncretism and bricolage that have been historically canonised. Bricolage is a perennially reappearing reality of ritual and religion, as Post refers to in his study of the current controversies around the limits and bounds of contemporary liturgical space.⁸⁴

Indeed, it is this 'popular' aspect of religion that is the focus but with a few important caveats: First, I prefer to steer away from the term religion altogether much of the time, and focus on the doing/acting out of religiosity, tied closely to ritual and to Lefebvre/Knott's concept of spatial practice. As will become clearer, while there are a number of geographical, cultural, religious and theoretical strings in this study, they are not only connected but intimately interdependent and at times barely distinguishable from each other. Religiosity, particularly as 'lived religion' is absolutely inseparable from ritual, the sacred, and the encounter in and with space. All of these are key concepts and none can be fully separated from the other. Finally, it must be clear here that religion is made up of a number of constituent elements besides the popular and beyond even the simple binary of popular vs. clerical, in addition to many shades in between. There is, however, a focus on the subaltern, the lesser voiced and ritual as a lived religiosity in the liminal spaces, outside of standard imprimatur. I will take a further look at the concept of popular religion, a logically important next element of these varied forms of religion, further on.

⁸⁴ POST: 'A Symbolic Bridge', 79.

Scholarly Approaches to the Concept of Religion

Of the scholars here invoked to define religion, two form something of a lineage (Knott and Hervieu-Léger) as Knott draws on Hervieu-Léger. I also draw sparingly on the work of Grimes. Unfortunately, none of them deal directly with the topic of multi-religious spaces and, on the subject of religion, they work somewhat differently. First and foremost, they all treat religion in its relationship to modern and secular realities, while I am mostly looking at classical traditions in contact and the somewhat unexpected or unorthodox ways in which they engage in spatial practice. Further, amongst them, they focus in different directions. Grimes is concerned about the role of ritual and new ritual forms in the contemporary world, Kim Knott concerns herself with a spatial focus and she contrasts this with the approach of Hervieu-Léger who proposes a more temporal model via her concept of religion as a 'chain of memory' and tradition.⁸⁵ Ronald Grimes I see as helpful for offering a basic and fluid definition of religion as institution and tradition (see below). As I emphasise tradition over institution, I see much of the ritual practice as an outworking of popular employment of traditional practices but not necessarily in an institution mode or, more often, quasi-institutional and drawing on tradition. Because my view is somewhat distinct, I draw on this variety of thinkers in the area where I feel they have strength for clarifying, despite their general focus on subjects that are related but distinct. In particular I hasten to add that there is one important distinction between my approach and that of Kim Knott, who sees the religious and secular as intertwined and who, thus, does not tend to separate out religion from non-religion. She says, referring to a common objection to post-modern thinking on religion, 'Some may object that this view does not resolve the difficulty of *where to draw the line between* the 'religious' and the 'secular'. This is with good reason, as there is no static boundary between them.'⁸⁶ By contrast, while the difficulty of separating the religious from the non-religious must be acknowledged and the sacred must be seen to appear outside traditional religion, the focus here is on the

⁸⁵ KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 1.

⁸⁶ KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 84-85.

more traditional 'chains of memory' albeit in the liminal and often heterodox space where the traditional (but often less institutional) forms of religion meet. In that sense, I must isolate religion as a distinct theme and to focus in on its less official, practiced form. In our look at the 'basic sacral' further on and when looking at the role of tourism in a study of pilgrimage, there will again be an approach to the more ambiguous side of religiosity and its mutual implication with the secular.

Defining Religion

'And by *religion* I mean spirituality sustained as a tradition or organized into an institution...' ⁸⁷

Drawing on Grimes quote above, I see religion as 'spirituality sustained as a tradition *or* organized into an institution' (with an emphasis on tradition over institution, in this project) and with Kim Knott (who prefers not to define it but to observe it in relationship to secularism) ⁸⁸ I am looking at the phenomenon as it manifests itself spatially. Kim Knott, in turn, comments on Hervieu-Léger who (as becomes clear later) speaks of religion as a lineage of tradition.

Having understood something of the background to the concept of religion, I am setting forward here both a definition of *religion* and a focus within the phenomena of religiosity. In order to define *religion* I am drawing on both Kim Knott and Ronald Grimes. I also cite Kim Knott's approach to religion in terms of my focus within the field but centred more on the practiced, lived and located aspects of religion, as specifically seen in Knott's work.

The problematisation of the concept of religion can neither be avoided nor can it be side-stepped by leaving the word aside entirely. Knott has pointed out, in her pursuit of religion as locational, that "'religion" and "religions" are Western categories which prove problematic when exported to Non-Western societies."⁸⁹ This goes very much to the heart of the issue with defining religion for this

⁸⁷ R. GRIMES: *Deeply Into the Bone: Re-inventing Rites of Passage* (London 2000) 71.

⁸⁸ KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 81.

⁸⁹ KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 81, 82.

project because we have begun on the assumption that more than one religious tradition can meet in one place and that this is particularly found in certain religious and cultural settings more than others. However, if we bring a Western definition of religion to Istanbul or Cairo (or even to the Balkans, despite it being classified as 'Europe') it presents us with a problem: the very essence of the question here revolves around the irreducibility of religion to one phenomenon, any one definition, or any frame of reference that assumes religious traditions to be entities with solid walls separating them, ultimately. The cases under examination are ones that show not so much a merging but a more free mixing of religious ritual than one might find in the historically Christian Netherlands, for example. There is a paradox here because we are at once meant to define religion and simultaneously show the ways in which it is a much more porous concept, particularly in some societies, than many had previously thought.

The first assumption, then, from which to begin is that the barriers between different religiosities are not what have commonly been understood in a Western context. From this point, however, it is important to avoid constructing an Eastern other that reflects an opposite tendency, as such. This would be to fall into an orientalist trap that has been repeated numerous times. Professor Robert Hayden has provided an important counterbalance to this in his work on 'Antagonistic Tolerance', which shows that some of the typically cited examples of religious-ritual-spatial coexistence and sharing, often found in the culturally-classified 'East', host division and competition under their apparent harmony, often. So, there is no monolithic 'Eastern' approach that exists simply to clarify the place of religion in the West. Instead, the approach will be to look at what is commonly labelled as religion, particularly in its popular manifestations, while keeping in mind that the observation is focused on noticeable patterns. This is a contrasting approach different from the more fixed definitions we might hope for.

It could also be suggested that the term be disused all together in this study. Kim Knott says, following on the work of Jeremy Carrette of the University of Kent:

'We are not situated in Pre-Modernity and must work within the language of our time, however ideologically

charged, rather than abandon or deny it. So, whilst I appreciate Fitzgerald's analysis, I draw the same conclusion as Carrette who concludes that "the idea of religion needs to be challenged...but it does not necessarily need to be eradicated."⁹⁰

However the approach of retaining the term is not a declaration of defeat in the pursuit of clarification. To the contrary, the utilisation of the term is similar to that suggested by Gayatri Spivak, the Bengali subalternist of Cornell University who has coined the term 'strategic essentialism'. The term 'religion' can create a fruitful, even dialectical, tension. What Carrette and Knott are putting forward is the importance of retaining the term so as to both be able to employ a recognisable term and simultaneously engage with it critically in order to better understand the crux of the problem with religion as a concept.⁹¹ Put in more Foucauldian terms, 'Carrette calls for the strategic operation of "religion" rather than its dissolution, on the grounds that the Western conception of religion provides, "a location for understanding a regime of knowledge-power."⁹²

Beyond the fertility of this potential dialectic and critique, there is also the particular situation of this piece of research. Almost all of those with whom I must be in dialogue will have a notion of religion that, to whatever degree influenced by Western discourse, is adopted by them. There is a respect for their own agency that I must maintain. When Non-Western people use an English language or European and relatively Christian term, that is their prerogative. This can be a sort of 'lingua franca' adopted in order to communicate across cultural barriers and is really understood to be only one layer of a given devotee's subjectivity.

⁹⁰ KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 83 commenting on J. CARRETTE: 'Foucault, Strategic Knowledge and the Study of Religion: A Response to McCutcheon, Fitzgerald, King and Alles', Review Symposium on Jeremy Carrette's *Foucault and Religion* and *Religion and Culture*, in *Culture and Religion* 2.1 (2001) 127-40.

⁹¹ Further, we will see that Coptologist David Frankfurter applies the same logic to the issue of syncretism and its loaded associations.

⁹² KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 83 commenting on CARRETTE: 'Foucault', 127-40.

A Turkish Muslim and a French Catholic must in some way label what they are both engaged in at *Meryem Ana Evi* in Ephesus, partly because the very place, spatial practice and architecture influences the discourse. That is, the physical structure itself influences the discourse because it formally compartmentalises the location via a 'Koran Room' and a Roman Catholic chapel, for example (this distinction is still partly present, but diminishing) making a clear delineation between two presumably separate 'religions' that both are resident in the shrine area. It is this, effectively existent discourse of language of religion and place that must be encountered and dealt with rather than discarded in an attempt at trendy intellectual purism. This however is a later discussion. In simple terms, our French Catholic and Turkish Muslim (not to exclude Turkish Christians and French Muslims, of course) are not engaging in legal discourse nor are they generally entering the building for the purposes of buying and selling products, for example. Rather, they are engaging in a form of what can be termed religiosity, ritual and spatial practice and, for this practical reason, we must come to terms with the terminological necessities implicit in a deepened understanding of these practices.

Having understood the limitations of the terminology, and its strategic use, it remains to determine the way in which we will understand 'religion' for this project. First and foremost, we are looking at 'lived religion' and contextualising theologically only rarely, as necessary, partly because 'Theology' is already a problematic concept being understood very differently in the non-Western European context that we are examining, both amongst the local Eastern forms of Christianity and Islamic ortho-praxis. So, as previously mentioned, this is a focus on religiosity over religion, practiced and embodied at a grassroots level rather than theorised and compartmentalised within a more clerical arena and discourse.

For our purposes, religion is focused on its embodiment in religiosity or 'lived religion', which in turn manifests very much in space and ritual, reflecting Kim Knott's triad of Religion, Space and Ritual. This is not intended to exclude more intellectual or clerical approaches to religion (as Kim Knott herself does not) but purely to maintain a focus on the more embodied and practical forms of religiosity. It will be necessary to employ the word religion (with a

slant toward religiosity) However, keeping in mind both the previously articulated critiques and the specification of the research, we will decidedly move to a highly decentred perspective on religion as a system that, whether considered in communal or individual terms, cannot be blanketed over a variety of times and places equally. In this project, religion will be approached as a phenomenon that manifests in the contexts of belief, ritual and space, with a particular accent on lived religion as ritual in local space, co-dependent on local culture and local variation. To understand this working definition of religion, focused on religiosity and the living of religion, it will be essential to go on to define space and ritual.

Here we will also define religion as a concretisation of a 'chain of memory' (see further development of Hervieu-Léger's concept under 'syncretism')⁹³ and 'spirituality sustained as a tradition or organized into an institution'⁹⁴ (Grimes) emphasising the 'or' between tradition and institution. By religiosity we mean the lived religion and ritual praxis that embody religion and spirituality, whether at the more clerical levels of passed on tradition (as seen in Hervieu-Léger's approach) or those forms that are, to varying degrees, less genealogically linked to clerical centres and their official norms, but all within the field of the religious culture. The less clerically directed forms are particularly in focus and perhaps could be seen to be in a sort of dynamic tension with the definition of religion as concretisation of spirituality and the development of a chain of memory surrounding it.

The tension, however, need not be absolute, entirely polar or binary. Religiosity is both a crystallisation of spirituality into institution and its formulation in the spatial practice of popular religiosity, which may form more or less a chain of memory, depending on the circumstances. As will become clearer in the examination of syncretism, this inherent multiplicity is to some degree admitted by Knott, Grimes and Hervieu-Léger. In closing, I define religion, ultimately by drawing on Grimes' view that religion is *a crystallisation of spirituality in form*, from Knott I take a focus on the aspect of *religion as spatial* but differing in

⁹³ D. HERVIEU-LÉGER: *Religion as a Chain of Memory* (Cambridge 2000) 101.

⁹⁴ GRIMES: *Deeply Into the Bone*, 71.

emphasis from Knott, I take a temporal view also, by drawing on Hervieu-Léger, *in defining religion as a product of tradition and the chain of memory*, however ambiguous the relationship to official institutions because of the hybrid and subaltern space that many of these tradition-based manifestations of religion inhabit.⁹⁵

Popular Religion

It should by now be clear that the point of analysis here is to understand spatial practice rather than dogma or doctrine. This is not to say that lived and located religion are being formulated as the only forms of religion but that the intention is to remain mostly within the realm of what is termed ‘popular religion’, analysing, at times, whether indeed the rituals are themselves marginal or official. For the purposes of this study, we will use the term ‘popular religiosity’ to refer to those practices which are outside the main ritual forms emphasised by a given religious tradition, which are often more corporate, and centralised. This is not to say that all popular religion is outside the pale of orthodoxy. Indeed in some cases it is encouraged by clerical hierarchy, yet is simply linked more closely to personal piety than corporate. As Paul Post has indicated, there have been periods, such as during the Catholic Counter-Reformation and the Baroque Era, when what is termed ‘popular devotion’ was more actively encouraged by the Roman Catholic hierarchy.⁹⁶ Similarly, in the world of Shia (‘Shi’ite’) Islam we see extensive pilgrimage to the sites of, for example, the martyrs of Karbala and the petitioning of significant figures such as Fatima Zahra and the Twelve Imams, all under the direct permission and encouragement of Shia *ulema*. This is in contrast to

⁹⁵ Here I would refer to the work of Jansen and Kühl from Nijmegen Radboud who (mentioned later) show the ways in which Muslim women adapt elements from Christian devotion to the Virgin Mary into their own religious practice. W. JANSEN and M. KÜHL: ‘Muslims, Marian Pilgrimages and Gender’, in *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 15:3 (2008) 295-311. This is a prime example of the role of tradition as a basis for hybridity.

⁹⁶ P. POST: ‘Qualities of Ritual: Three Critical Reflections on the Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy’, in *Questions Liturgiques/Studies in Liturgy* 88:1 (2007) 24-51.

the Wahhabi ideology of, for example, the Saudi state, which not only prohibits such practices but also demolishes shrines that are even suggested as potentially encouraging what is considered idolatry by that state's school of religious thought. So, within a given religious tradition there can be a variety of attitudes of the clergy towards popular religiosity. Popular religion does not always equal heretical or opposed by religious establishments. Instead, it is a more loose and perhaps more layperson-lead religiosity than other aspects of religious practice, such as weekly (or regular, outside of the Abrahamic contexts) convened and clerically lead worship.

What is held in common between all of these different forms of popular religiosity is a focus on ritualisation that is somewhat more individual (or amongst groups of lay people, such as in pilgrimage) and only partly directed by hierarchy or entirely non-clerical. For example, men and women choose, within certain bounds, how, when and for what reasons they undertake pilgrimages to sacred sites, often for reasons of personal need. By contrast, Friday Juma prayers and Sunday Mass (to use just two relevant examples) are conducted at set times, according to very pre-ordained rites and are lead by trained and approved clerics. Visiting the shrine of a local saint to spontaneously request intercession for a particular problem (however ortho- or heterodox) must be in some way categorised distinctly, however much it is also part of a greater religious whole and cannot be truly severed at all from the body of belief and practice to which it is connected, Islamic, Christian or otherwise.

Further, there is nothing that concrete that would stop folk-magical and popular religious ideas from penetrating the world of the clergy also, at times. A 14th century Bishop of Salzburg once requested, and was denied, a Jewish *mezuzah* to be placed for protection at the gate of his castle.⁹⁷ Hasluck cites examples in which a Greek Orthodox priest was said to have turned to Turkish ritual practices for some particular problem to be cured, such as a priest who believed his wife to have been bewitched by a Turk and who thus felt that, rather than his own prayers, those of a Turkish

⁹⁷ J. TRACHTENBERG: *Jewish Magic and Superstition* (Philadelphia 2004)

Muslim *hoja* were preferable.⁹⁸ So, in this sense, while I make use of Bourdieu below, I do not see his formulation of non-mainstream religion amongst working classes as absolute, but instead suggestive of a common positioning among practitioners of less mainstream ritual.

Perhaps we could speak of popular religiosity as something that is part of the larger *religious culture*. This would be the greater field within which religiosity takes place, a field wherein there is no pure ritual or religious doctrinal formulation that is not connected to the discourse, landscape, power dynamics and the cultural context in which it takes form. Popular religion is one important aspect of this network of religious culture.

So, the focus on religiosity here will not be one that is heavily reflected by scriptures, ecclesiastical declarations or *fatwa*'s issued by Islamic scholars. But does that make it popular religion? Certainly it places an accent on what has been called the subaltern. Yet, the concept of popular religion/religiosity has been problematized by some. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has said the following about the related concepts of magic versus religion, which are closely related to the tensions between the structures of popular and official religious practice:

'Given, on one side, the relation that links the degree of systemization and moralization of religion to the degree of development of the religious apparatus and, on the other, the relation that links progress in the division of religious labour to progress in the division of labour and urbanization, most authors tend to accord to magic the characteristics of systems of practices and representations belonging to the least economically developed social formations or to the most disadvantaged social classes of class-divided societies.'⁹⁹

It is important to note that I am not invoking Pierre Bourdieu as a major ideological force within this enquiry.

⁹⁸ HASLUCK: *Christianity and Islam*, 78.

⁹⁹ P. BOURDIEU: 'Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field', in *Comparative Social Research* 13 (1991)13.

Instead, I mean here to indicate that he has touched on an important point which partly (although not entirely) explains the dynamic of magical practice, which I would place closely parallel to popular religiosity (while recognising its distinctive traits) in one of its larger manifestations as the terrain of less privileged groups. That is to say that, from Bourdieu's sociological point of view, there has been a development of specialisation and labour hierarchy in religion that is parallel to social developments within the emerging world of urbanisation. This left certain non-specialised folk-magical practitioners with unofficial rites. One could draw parallels to the world of popular devotional practice, which does not require a great deal of clerical input, such as making pilgrimages, special prayers, novenas in a Catholic context, *istikhara* and *ziyaret* in an Islamic setting, for instance, plus *curanderismo* and traditional Islamic healing. Here I would not necessarily fully ascribe to the idea of pinpointing a moment in which an urbanisation takes place that shifts and divides religion into two forms: one of specialisation and one of folk-practice, but I would accept the general tendency of the two to go in different directions, circumstantially. Not being sufficiently qualified as a sociologist or historian, I cannot judge whether such a division has historically taken place in quite the way that Bourdieu describes. What one can observe, however, is the social pattern linking less official forms of religion with less socially empowered groups. A simple example is one given by David Frankfurter in his work *Syncretism and the Holy Man in Late Antique Egypt*, in which he quotes the church historian Evagrius (534 CE):

'Within a century of the death of Simeon the Stylite and following the construction of an immense basilica around his pillar, a church official beheld the local farmers dancing one night around the pillar and circumambulating it with their beasts of burden—drawing Simeon into their landscape, as it were.'¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ J.BIDEZ and J.PARMENTIER (eds): EVAGRIUS: *Ecclesiastical History* 1:14 (London 1898) 24.

This example reflects our discussion of popular religion thus far. Popular religion need not be heretical (although it may be), it need not be magical (although it may be) and it need not fit into a clearly defined category but it must find its location outside the main clerically directed, corporate rituals, whether it is approved of or not, by said clerical authorities. This, then, is a category with which we can work, while knowing that it is ultimately a kind of strategic essentialism, describing phenomena for the purpose of analysis that are not easily encapsulated but which do form a recognisable motif.

Bourdieu then goes on to elaborate that magical practices in particular are found amongst the more marginalised strata of society for the obvious but often unnoticed reason that those with less access to resources may be more likely to access power and meet needs through supernatural means, given that natural ones are more scarce. A very similar statement could be made about popular religiosity, despite the fact that it encompasses a number of practices, not necessarily ones that would be defined by all as 'magical'. What remains constant, however, is that both magical and popular religious practices are often centred on desperate needs. In the example from Hasluck's work,¹⁰¹ we see the illness of a Greek child, with no apparently efficacious help from medicine or her own Orthodox Christian community's sacred forms of healing, as the motivation for the mixing of pilgrimage rites, in desperation and hope.

This is significant because, while researching mixed pilgrimage and what has been called syncretism, we often do not realise that we are re-inscribing a classist view of religion or are so afraid of doing so that there is a failure to note the context of power dynamic and class in the study of religion and ritual. The term 'popular religion', I suggest, should not be employed without an awareness of whom it describes because it is far from a neutral term, if such things as neutral terms do indeed exist. However, it should be employed and will be used here to indicate those elements of ritual practice which (while at times clerically sponsored and at times more marginally positioned) are not central to clerically directed practice and thus are malleable to a more

¹⁰¹ HASLUCK: *Christianity and Islam*, 79.

individual and non-mainstream application, particularly by those who may have a more subaltern positioning. As Maria Couroucli of the University of Paris has indicated in her work on shared pilgrimage as popular religion amongst Greeks and Turks, 'Shared shrines are mostly situated in marginal places...beyond and despite organized religious and political communities' and, 'common ritual practices are a grass roots phenomenon.'¹⁰² Popular religion is, to put it simply, centred in grassroots spaces. It remains, then, to make a thoughtful approach to space.

B. Space

In order to have an entry point into a potential theory of shared ritual spaces, we cannot avoid the necessity of actually examining the role and concept of space itself. The understanding of space and place has, interestingly, developed into a particular discipline of its own and an attempt to summarise all the important approaches here would prove to be too broad for the intended aims of this project. Instead, we will examine a few thinkers whose scholarship has shed light on useful key concepts of space and place with a clear focus on relationship to illuminate the issue of ritual sharing within both place and space. The understanding of space will eventually lead us to focus on the conceptual level which, in some forms of Islamic esoteric tradition is connected to a spiritually significant 'imaginal realm' (*alam al mithal*). Before that exploration, however, it is of help to understand some basic theory of space as put forward by Henri Lefebvre and developed by Knott in the context of religious studies. Space is potentially the most vast and abstract concept of the main relevant elements and thus is the most open to theorising beyond the boundaries of what is needed to work with the spaces in question. For that reason we have a few main focuses, all of which move towards an understanding of space and sacred space which takes into

¹⁰² M. COUROCLI, 'Sharing Nostalgia in Istanbul: Christian and Muslim Pilgrims to St. George's Sanctuary', paper presented at *Sharing Sacred Space: Religion and Conflict Resolution*, Columbia University, New York, February 14-15, 2008, 1.

account the social element of space and then approaches the play of subjectivities in the internal, external and culturally defined ways of looking at space, using Lefebvre's concept of conceptual and perceived space, also known as representations of space and spaces of representation. This further takes into account the role of systems of authority within our perception of space and its embodiment in physical structures. The encounter with space as sacred space and place follows after covering some of the more essential elements of what defines a place as a sacred space, approaching the topic via designation of space, symbolism, beautification and communion with the sacred or transcendent.

Space as Relational

Kim Knott and the braid of thinkers which she invokes in her work are particularly helpful because they describe space through a relational and humanistic approach which sees both space and place as things which can be perceived as dynamically in interrelationship with the people who perceive and experience spaces but also those who conceive of and create physical constructions. By understanding something of the relationship between individuals and the spaces and places they inhabit, it is possible to build a foundation for looking at the shrines in Ephesus and beyond which are homes to a unique spatial practice. It is this particularly relational view which is important for this analysis. Knott makes a distinction between space and place, describing place as more grounded and space as denoting something more abstract.¹⁰³ Both of these constructions are at play in our analysis of the modern Ephesian shrines.

According to Kant, we can only know space through orientation within it, which takes place through the instrumentality of the physical body particularly, he says, by placing things in relation to the left and right hand sides, up and down, front and back.¹⁰⁴ Kant extrapolated from this point that even transcendent

¹⁰³ KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 229.

¹⁰⁴ E. CASEY: *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical Enquiry* (Berkeley 1998) 205.

beings such as angels and deities are known through orientation via the body.¹⁰⁵ So, for all its potential abstraction, space is known through consciousness and its interaction with its surroundings, in a dynamic relationship via the body. This is the direction that Doreen Casey and Lefebvre have taken, continuing beyond a reduction of space to a solipsistic experience of one body and moving into the construction and perception of space as social, beyond the proverbial and theoretical 'desert island'. (To be clear, they have emphasised this particular leap but that is not to suggest that Kant engaged in reductionist solipsism by any stretch of the imagination. Here I am only making the distinction for dialectical purposes).

A social approach to space is important because it is an approach that is generally useful in the overlap of Religious and Ritual Studies. Doreen Massey, bringing in the relationship of space with the social, says that:

'The spatial is socially constituted. 'Space' is created out of the vast intricacies, the incredible complexities, of the interlocking and the non-interlocking, and the network of relations at every scale from local to global. What makes a particular view of these social relations specifically spatial is their simultaneity. It is a simultaneity, also, which has extension and configuration. But simultaneity is absolutely not stasis.'¹⁰⁶

It is very interesting that many of those who are contributing thought on the subject of space are invoking the concept of simultaneity and are doing so at an epistemic level, whereas we are looking at the subject in a very particular multi-religious context. But this of course should come as no surprise because all space (whether deemed religious or secular) is shared to some degree and therefore hosts simultaneity which I would define as a number of acts, gestures and beings occupying, in any given extracted moment, coinciding space and place. Any given aspect of it can be

¹⁰⁵ CASEY: *The Fate of Place*, 205.

¹⁰⁶ D. MASSEY: 'Politics and Space/Time', in M. KEITH and S. PILE (eds.) *Place and the Politics of Identity* (London 1993) 155-156.

extracted, appreciated and analysed, not only simultaneous pilgrimage. Shields says that, 'moments are revelatory of the totality of possibilities contained in daily existence.'¹⁰⁷ The capturing of a few revelatory moments in the sea of devotional practice is the focus of this project.

Perhaps the best explanation of the spatial, relational, subjective and yet communal activity that happens in the bee-hive of sacred space is the following, from Eade and Salnow's 'Contested Space' and with this one can prepare to go a step further:

'...it is the meanings and ideas that officials, pilgrims and locals invest in the shrine – meanings and ideas which are determinately shaped by their political and religious, national and regional, ethnic and class backgrounds – which help to give the shrine its religious capital, though this investment might well be in a variety of theological currencies. The power of the shrine, therefore, derives in large part from its character almost as a religious void, a ritual space accommodating diverse meaning and practices – though of course the shrine staff might attempt, with varying degrees of success, to impose a single official discourse...The sacred centre, then, in this perspective, appears as a vessel into which pilgrims devoutly pour their hopes, prayers and aspirations...'¹⁰⁸

Conceived Space/Representations of Space

Space, however, is not simply place and the subjective beings who relate around and within it. There are a number of layers to the ways in which we understand spatiality. One of these is well described by Lefebvre as Conceived or Conceptual space. He speaks in terms of the field of conceiving space, moulding it for the purpose of creating physically constructed locations such as

¹⁰⁷ SHIELDS:*Lefebvre*, 58.

¹⁰⁸ J. EADE and M. SALLNOW: *Contesting the Sacred: the Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage* (London 1991) 15-16 as cited in S. SUTCLIFFE: *Religion: Empirical Studies* (Aldershot 2004) 64.

offices and similar edifices which, in turn are manifestations of space and the conceptual world of those who have the power to design these public institutionalisations of place.¹⁰⁹ Lefebvre, who brought forward his triad for analysing social space, also referred to this as 'representations of space', the first major leg of his triad, alongside 'spaces of representation' and spatial practice. Spatial practice will be highlighted below in the context of ritual. In looking at the concept of representations of space it's important to know that Lefebvre saw this not so much as a typology but instead as a fairly concrete analytical tool to look at interconnected manifestations of space that have come to the fore at very particular times and locations, such as the European Middle Ages.¹¹⁰ He sees then, representations of space as appearing in the very specific world of modernity where he says that those with the authority to design buildings are now the conceivers of space, whereas, in the past, space would generally be lived first and then worked with conceptually by architects and others. Interestingly, however, for our purposes, he does make an exception in the world of religiosity, which he admits to being highly conceptual previous to outer manifestation in his work on space in the Middle Ages (i.e. religious spaces reflect design but also draw heavily on cosmology which is strongly perceptual). This aspect of his work, however, is most highlighted when we move to a study of spatiality in which interior spaces become exteriorised through the more grassroots cultural context rather than the formal, imposed relationship to space that we see in representations of space/conceived space.

Spaces of Representation

Both representation of space and spaces of representation are relevant to an understanding of ritual convergence. Spaces of representation, however, become more interesting as we move towards a hypothetical understanding of the phenomena under discussion at the level of the more internal and imaginative spaces. Lefebvre contributes another layer when he indicates that spaces of representation are those spaces in which one

¹⁰⁹ KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 36.

¹¹⁰ LEFEBVRE: *The Production of Space* (Oxford 1992) 33, 38-40.

brings culture and tradition to the perception of the space and objects encountered. Lefebvre¹¹¹ indicates that spaces of representation are based on and projected on to the world based on the imaginative cultural level that is carried internally (while always being in dynamic interconnection with the world of phenomena and discourse of the environment, rather than stagnant or solid). In particular, he points out that church architecture and ecclesiastical spaces, such as graveyards, are to some degree products of and engaged with spaces of representation via cultural and religious cosmology which, he says, vary from place to place and reflect folk-perception (on top of the meta-imagery of the church, which is also largely representation of space, the previous category).

I believe that in order to understand the phenomena of ritual convergence and simultaneity in multi-religious spaces, this imaginative level is absolutely key and is closely linked (although perhaps not conceived identically) to 'spaces of representation', as will become clearer later when we look at Lefebvre, Knott, Ibn Arabi and the concept of the imaginal world (*alam al-mithal*) in esoteric Islamic discourse.

Spatial Practice

Lefebvre, in 'The Production of Space' has spoken of his triad succinctly and in a natural order, as 'three moments of the perceived, the conceived and the lived.'¹¹² That is to say that, as we have seen, there is the experience of what is encountered through our personal and communal lenses, there is its conceptualisation and there is the playing out in space of what is perceived and conceived. Ritual spaces are very much observable through the lens of spatial practice and are indeed, key locations of spatial practice, although spatial practice need not be inherently religious, of course.¹¹³

Lefebvre says, interestingly, 'So much is intimated by myths, whether Western or Oriental, but it is only actualized in and

¹¹¹ LEFEBVRE: *The Production of Space*, 39.

¹¹² LEFEBVRE: *The Production of Space*, 40.

¹¹³ KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 39.

through (religio-political) space. Like all social practice, spatial practice is lived directly before it is conceptualised...'¹¹⁴ There are two intersecting propositions within his sentence. First, he places forward the idea that sacred narratives, in whatever cultural context, hold within them a great deal of meaning ('so much is intimated by myths, whether 'Western' or 'Oriental'). He then goes on to state that this meaning is made real and lived through space, which is religio-political (i.e. spatiality is here undertaken through religiosity and its empowered representatives, or its more grassroots forms). So sacred traditions are inseparably connected to not only the stories that they unfold but also the way in which they manifest spatially and practically. This, in fact, is spatial practice and another angle on the reality of ritual. Lefebvre also indicates that 'spatial practice is lived directly before it is conceptualised'. Coming back to our main focus which is at *Meryem Ana Evi* in Ephesus and the context of Anatolia, we could perhaps relate this somewhat to the question, raised by Hasluck in his work on Anatolian Christian-Muslim ritual encounters, as to

¹¹⁴ LEFEBVRE: *The Production of Space*, 34. I prefer to use the term 'sacred narrative' over 'myth' because, while even designating something as 'sacred' may be culturally specific to the West, although certainly not entirely...indigenous societies do also sometimes emphasise a distinction between objects, as seen in Smith and Eliade's story of the Australian Tjilpa(J. SMITH: *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago 1987) 1-11) and their sacred pole, used as a central set-apart object held by a peripatetic community. This term seems to be more helpful than the highly fraught term 'myth'. Myth, as a signifier, is too closely linked with the notion of false or emblematic but non-historical story, as it has come to be reformed (in the latter case) in much contemporary discourse. All of this, if we are to be honest, largely has taken place outside of the world of the societies and times in which many of these sacred narratives took form. To my knowledge, there is no ancient Babylonian or Turkic discourse designating the sacred stories of these peoples as 'myths' and here our desire is to communicate as closely to the source as possible, noting that limitations are inevitable. With this in mind, 'sacred narrative' is perhaps better adapted to relaying some sense of the original intentions in what we refer to as 'myths'. In a similar vein, 'paganism' is a term I distance myself from in the section within which I discuss natural sacred sites in Turkic tradition, because I see 'pagan' as a term that is not self-representative for religious practitioners that show respect for natural objects in their spatial practice and sacred habitus.

how Muslims become ritually inscribed and physically built into Churches and how occasionally, the reverse has historically 'taken place'. Lefebvre states, definitively responding to a chicken and egg debate that is highly discussed in other forums, that the act is undertaken before it is conceptualised.

We can look at the example of the role of Islamic prayer space in Ephesus. The question of the arising of a Muslim prayer-space is one that will be relevant to Lefebvre's notion that spatial practice is lived before it is conceptualised. Islamic spatial practice, via Muslim pilgrimage (a typical form of popular religiosity) has 'taken place' for some time now, in Meryem Ana Evi. We will observe what the story is with the possibly heterotopic presence of Muslims who brought their own distinct and pre-conceptualised spatial practice into Meryem Ana Evi, which is itself constructed (at least those parts which were directly constructed physically by the church, such as the altar) along the lines of a Roman Catholic representation of space and whose spatial practice was eventually incorporated, separately, into the building via conceptualisation and representation, being eventually minimalised again. That is to say, spatial practice develops via action in space. Muslims and Christians take two different tracks in the practicing of space. So, progressing further later, the application will be to look at the ways in which the ritual practice of Muslims has come to be incorporated into the spatial practice of the Virgin's house in Ephesus, within a city that is already a rich palimpsest.

C. Ritual

Instinctively, most would be capable of identifying a ritual upon seeing it, whether it be a Hindu *puja*, an African wedding or a secular flag-hoisting ceremony in a modern state. Perhaps some, informed by a more religiously discursive or traditional environment, would respond more to the first two examples as 'ritual'. The contestation of and contingency between definitions of ritual is precisely the creative friction that is necessary to come to a more clarified understanding of the approach to ritual in this project. As becomes clear when examining the wide variance of

definitions of religion, concepts such as ritual and religion are highly contingent and dependent on the system of power and knowledge in which they grow and are articulated, as previously noted by Knott in her own definition of religion vs. secularism.

Talal Asad, in his work 'Genealogies of Religion' has included, in a theoretically interesting way, a genealogy of ritual, as a developing concept, from an anthropological point of view. Asad shows the way in which a Western European notion of ritual as something Christian in origin has coloured the lens of much discourse on religion and the category of 'comparative religion'. He points out that in the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, published in 1771, ritual is defined as 'a book directing the order and manner to be observed in celebrating religious ceremonies, and performing divine service in a particular church...'.¹¹⁵ However, by the third edition in 1797, the definition had expanded considerably, making the significant leap to the notion of ritual as something pre-dating Christianity:

'Ritual: a book directing the order and manner to be in observed in performing divine service in a particular church, diocese, or the like. The ancient heathens had also their rituals, which contained their rites and ceremonies to be observed in building a city, consecrating a temple or altar, in sacrificing, and deifying, in dividing the curiae, tribes, centuries and in general, in all their religious ceremonies.'¹¹⁶

There is then a silence on ritual in the encyclopaedia from the 11th edition (1852) until the 17th edition in 1910. Interestingly, the early 20th century was a period in which the science of archaeology was becoming increasingly developed, especially along the routes of European colonisation. The 1910 edition not only re-instated ritual as an article but includes five subsections labelled 'The Magical Element of Ritual,' 'The Interpretation of Ritual,' 'Changes in Ritual,' 'The Classification of Rites,' and 'Negative

¹¹⁵ ASAD: *Genealogies of Religion*, 56.

¹¹⁶ ASAD: *Genealogies of Religion*, 56.

Rites'.¹¹⁷ This demonstrates a considerable broadening out process. First we have ritual as the book used in Christian worship, followed by the notion that ritual can also be shadowed by the other, the pre-Christian rites that preceded it. Yet, there is also this more broad process that developed, as European thinking began to expand alongside the work of anthropologists and archaeologists, particularly in the colonial world.

Interestingly, the 1910 edition makes mention of the indigenous experts in non-Christian ritual (however much being unimpressed by them) and begins to truly universalise ritual as a phenomenon found everywhere and which can be labelled based upon certain universal characteristics. Asad indicates that, from that point, several anthropologists begin, via their own particular emphases, to shape a discourse around the purpose and nature of ritual:

'Some later anthropologists were to trace these meanings to magical attempts at dealing with the natural environment (e.g., Malinowski) or to effects that maintained the continuity of social structures (e.g., Radcliffe-Brown); yet others to cultural categories by which messages are communicated (e.g. Leach) or to religious experiences that transcend cultural categories and social structures (e.g., Turner).'¹¹⁸

Asad, then, shows us that the concept of ritual is a more flexible one than commonly thought, a category that has often changed and reflected the dominant notions of its time. So, with the knowledge that the concept is flexible and not particularly static and with the awareness that defining concepts such as religion and ritual is a potentially infinite project, it's necessary to look at the best way to work with the concept of ritual for this particular study, rather than attempt an exhaustive survey of potential interpretations.

Here, then, our focus on ritual is more specific than the field in which one would find a great deal of debate about what does or

¹¹⁷ ASAD: *Genealogies of Religion*, 56.

¹¹⁸ ASAD: *Genealogies of Religion*, 59-60.

does not constitute ritual because these examples of inter-religious convergence in ritual spaces are explicitly concerned with traditional religious forms, whether having a more popular or clerical origin. In narrowing the definition to ritual that is generally deemed religious, the work of Catherine Bell is of interest. She both cites and affirms the view of Asad that ritual has historically been defined in the West by Christianity and Post-Christian secular culture. For this reason it is a term that is particular to a context and not universal. As such, it will cause a certain dissonance when, thinking that the concept is universally understood, a Western thinker applies a Western, Post-Enlightenment definition of ritual to a rite taking place in Turkey or Syria. Let us say, for example, that one maintains a Post-Enlightenment, Protestant-influenced perspective on the relationship of belief to religious and ritual practice. (This, to be clear, is not a judgement on any particular philosophical or religious orientation, but instead a question of raising consciousness about that which is often presumed to be normative). In such a case, it is very possible that the notion of assent to a creed is tightly bound to attendance at a particular place of worship that corresponds to such beliefs and one engages there in rites consistent with the creed assented to.

But perhaps, both in the Western World and, for example, the Middle East, the reality is not so very simple as this, creating a kind of cognitive dissonance for said Western thinker. Instead it might be observed that a Muslim woman will seek help from the Virgin Mary at the Church of Seidnaya near Damascus. As she does so, she participates in her own way, modifying slightly her behaviour (not making the sign of the cross during prayers, for example) but essentially coming to the sacred place and rituals with a belief in their efficacy, as described by the historian and travel writer William Dalrymple in his book, 'From the Holy Mountain' and others, over a number of centuries.¹¹⁹ In such a case, the simple trajectory from creed to a place of worship that affirms and ritualises that same belief is not so clear. Instead there is both a need for help and an element of shared belief in the same

¹¹⁹ B.Z. KEDAR: 'Convergences of Oriental Christian, Muslim and Frankish Worshippers: The case of Seidnaya', in Y. HEN (ed.): *De Sionexibit lux et verbum domini de Hierusalem* (Turnhout 2001) 59-69.

spiritual figure, with officially divergent views on who precisely the saint or prophet is, in certain details. This brings the Muslim woman to share in a ritual at a place of worship that bases its practice on beliefs she can only partially assent to (assuming that she even frames things through this discourse which, indeed, she may not) but she comes with a firm belief in their efficacy as rituals and in the church as a sacred place of power. She then participates in the rituals to whatever degree she is comfortable (again, we can look at the example of not crossing oneself) and may also engage in Islamic ritual practices on the church grounds, such as performing salah at particular times in the day. In this repeating pattern at ambiguous pilgrimage sites, the negotiative aspect of ritual is common.

Of course it is also very possible that the Syrian woman is 100 percent comfortable with Western modes of discourse, having been immersed in them through her education and life experience, in which case any misunderstanding could be cleared up. Very key in this regard is Catherine Bell, who has pointed out that participation in ritual without full assent, for a variety of reasons, is also not unknown amongst, for example, American Catholics who statistically oppose much papal policy but who participate with great enthusiasm when papal visits to the US are planned.¹²⁰

In Hasluck's work we see that in South-Eastern Europe and Anatolia it has not been uncommon for some to take Christian and Muslim ritual and remove it entirely from the realm of belief, placing it in the field of magic so entirely that Muslims will use Christian ritual to protect themselves from Christians in battle or to protect against the perceived use of magic by Christians against them (Muslims). Christians have also practiced the exact reverse in confrontation with Muslims.¹²¹ To extend the previous example, a Muslim woman in Syria and a European man, both products of the Post-Enlightenment era, could be seeing through such radically different lenses that one could also despair of defining ritual, having already struggled to compartmentalise the concept or religion.

¹²⁰ BELL: *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 86.

¹²¹ HASLUCK: *Christianity and Islam*, 34-36.

Catherine Bell, who ultimately leaves us in this quandary but at least with more clarity about the paradox, sums it up well in her work 'Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions' when she writes:

'The way that European and American scholars generate questions about ritual reflects and promotes basic elements of their cultural worldview. The notion of ritual has become one of the ways in which these cultures experience and understand the world. So, what does an interest in ritual tell us about ourselves? Most readily, it tells us that we do not live with a seamless worldview; what we do and what we think or believe are routinely distinguished, separated out and differently weighted....It suggests an eagerness to find or forge spiritual-cultural commonalities among the heterogeneity of belief and styles in the world, but primarily in terms that extend our historical experiences as nearly universal. This hubris is not unconstructive, but it now comes face to face with a fresh set of challenges, Whether it can address and solve them is not clear, but these are the issues that ritual and the study of ritual will struggle with in the near future.'¹²²

To conclude, Asad, Catherine Bell and others successfully show that, like the concept of religion, the notion of ritual is one that requires a deep contextualisation and one that often says more about the constructor than the construction. Having done that to a degree sufficient for a basic understanding of the concept's complexity, we must engage with how the term ritual will here be employed, positively. Ronald Grimes, in his work 'Deeply into the Bone: Reinventing Rites of Passage' has defined our major themes in the following way:

By *ritual* I mean sequences of ordinary action rendered special by virtue of their condensation, elevation, or stylization. By *spirituality* I intend practiced attentiveness aimed at nurturing a sense of the interdependence of all

¹²² BELL: *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 267.

beings sacred and all things ordinary. And by *religion* I mean spirituality sustained as a tradition or organized into an institution.¹²³

I believe that Grimes has here summarised the best definitions we could possibly use in this study, not only for ritual but also for both spirituality and religion. Accepting the proposition that ritual is action that is rendered special, we further focus on actions rendered special/ritualised in order to show veneration and to make petitions for help. Of these actions, we are particularly focused on those that take place in a multi-religious environment.

Ritual from Below, the Subaltern and 'Oriental' Ritual

'Subaltern consciousness...is never fully recoverable...it is effaced even as it is disclosed...it is irreducibly discursive',¹²⁴

As we have alluded to, the very notions of studying popular religiosity (and of particularly 'Eastern' forms of religiosity) is fraught with concerns about re-inscribing classist, orientalist and colonial discourse via insufficient reflection on terminology and epistemes. A study on the potential for misuse of the term 'popular religion' has, in fact been undertaken by Dr. Manuel Mejido of the UN Research Institute for Social Development who points out that, in the US/North American academy, 'popular religion' is almost exclusively associated with Latin American and other minorities but this is often not noticed or articulated.¹²⁵ Kim Knott in her work on the left hand has focused on the Tantric traditions of India to give some of the more interesting examples of the role of left and right in the symbolic order of that particular cultural, religious and esoteric inheritance. In the explanation, she makes a few interesting and relevant points regarding the role of the Western

¹²³ GRIMES: *Deeply Into the Bone*, 70-71.

¹²⁴ G. SPIVAK: *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York 1988) 203.

¹²⁵ M. MEJIDO: The Illusion of Neutrality: Reflections on the Term 'Popular Religion' in *Social Compass* 49 (2002) 295. Electronic version: <http://scp.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/49/2/295>, accessed 20, February, 2009.

scholar who examines texts and practices amongst people who are non-European or of non-European descent.

While some of Knott's observations are particular to the Western and Orientalist encounter with Tantra, there are a few cautions and notes that are here applicable, specifically as described in Kim Knott's agreement with a particularly paradoxical approach to religious studies found in the work of both Richard King¹²⁶ and D. Chakrabarty. Knott says:

'At one stroke, the scholar, whether historian or spatial theorist, should both reflexively practise his or her methodological approach whilst being attentive not only to its contextual limitations, but also to its very limit in the face of emerging critical possibilities from beyond its epistemological boundary. Chakrabarty does not deny the difficulty of this task.'¹²⁷

As already alluded to, an important potential contribution to the understanding of ritual is that of what has been termed 'Subaltern Studies' by a lineage of thinkers beginning with Gramsci, the Subaltern Studies Collective of the Indian subcontinent and currently often represented unofficially by the controversial Gayatri Chakrabarty Spivak. For the purposes of looking at what is often termed folk-ritual (keeping in mind that this is only one aspect of ritual in Ephesus, our main case study, but is a major part in much ritual of this inter-religious genre) it is of use to draw on some of the concepts coming out of the Subaltern Studies Group, its offspring, critical inheritors and embellishers such as Spivak. This is only in so far as is necessary to excavate some of the lesser-understood aspects of simultaneous ritualisation, which often takes place in a more subaltern space.

In one of its most narrow but telling definitions, the 'subaltern' refers to low-ranking military officers.¹²⁸ In its development among these intellectuals, it progressed from a term

¹²⁶ KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 189-190, quoting R. KING: *Orientalism and the Religion: Post-Colonial Theory, India and the 'Mystic East'* (1999).

¹²⁷ KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 185.

¹²⁸ J. SIMPSON (ed.): *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 'subaltern' (Oxford 2009).

almost synonymous with the proletariat, to a designation of those voices which have often been kept out of official discourse because of their social disenfranchisement based on gender, race or class (amongst other possibilities) and has been opened out further by Spivak. Spivak sees the subaltern as a kind of positioning in which a human can at times be placed but which, interestingly, need not be a permanent label; She says that “Subalternity is a position without identity”.¹²⁹ We have seen and will see that this non-mainstream, unofficial and unheard element cannot be pinned to one social class or ethnic group although it may predominate in some. Couroucli mentions a pilgrimage, for example, in which many participants are middle class but which is largely ignored by the media. It is a mixed pilgrimage attracting many Turkish Muslims but is somehow off the map of mainstream discourse, to some degree.¹³⁰

Much of what has already been said above about defining religion in relationship to ‘popular religion’ fits very well into the theme of the subaltern as a positioning that exists socially and in ritual space. To take a relevant example, Willy Jansen of Radboud University, where she teaches on the subject of Gender and Religion, focused on women and devotion to the Virgin Mary, has collaborated with Meike Kühl of Utrecht University to produce a paper on the positioning and experience of Muslim women who are devotees of Marian shrines.¹³¹ Interestingly, they not only surveyed Muslim women at Ephesus but also in Kevelaer (Germany) and the appropriately named shrine of Our Lady of Fátima (Portugal).¹³² In a sense, there is a subaltern (although not so named) approach at work here, an excavation of stories and rituals that come from below the general radar of the predictably mainstream and power-invested voices, those of the male, the cleric, the Christian in the Christian place of worship. Instead, the focus is on the female, the non-Christian, the layperson and

¹²⁹ G. SPIVAK: ‘Scattered Speculations on the Subaltern and the Popular’, in *Postcolonial Studies* 8:4 (2005) 476.

¹³⁰ COUROUCLI: ‘Sharing Nostalgia in Istanbul’, 5.

¹³¹ JANSEN and KÜHL: ‘Muslims, Marian Pilgrimages’, 295-311.

¹³² JANSEN and KÜHL: ‘Muslims, Marian Pilgrimages’, 303-304, appropriate because of the overlap in names between the highly revered Fatima, daughter of the Prophet Muhammed and the Roman Catholic shrines.

‘unofficial’ spirituality and religiosity. In that sense, there is a subaltern approach underpinning this entire study while yet, at the same time, there will be no explicit detour (beyond the aforementioned explanations) into this field, which is a project unto itself. Instead a subaltern critique and eye for observation will come into play where relevant.

D. Syncretism

To begin understanding something of what syncretism is and how it might be relevant in looking at the shrines and simultanea under consideration, we must first look at the sacred as a concept distinct from religion, as such, and in that way find something of the space through which to analyse whether or not the practices we are looking at are, in fact, syncretic. Before, however, we can enter in to that, a basic understanding of syncretism must be established.

The earliest use of the term *syncretism* (Greek: *synkretismos*) is ancient and was formally employed by Plutarch (46 CE) to describe two opposing camps in Crete who were able to join forces in the face of a common enemy, reconciling, to some degree, their differences, for the purpose at hand.¹³³ Literally, Plutarch used the term to refer to ‘a coming together of Cretans’ although it is unclear to what degree he was employing an older term or creating a neologism based on a pun.¹³⁴ It was employed by Erasmus to indicate the bringing together of opposed viewpoints in the 15th century and by the 17th century it had become a pejorative often employed in theological texts and identified with heretical movements. By the 19th century this was less exclusively focused on the theologically ‘other’ and began to be seen as a tradition with its own history of syncretism.¹³⁵ Kamstra has gone on to suggest that syncretic ways of being are found amongst all human beings

¹³³ A. DROOGERS, ‘The Problem of Definition, The Definition of the Problem’, in J. GORT, H. VROOM, R. FERNHOUT, A. WESSELS (eds): *Dialogue and Syncretism: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, (Amsterdam 1989) 10.

¹³⁴ R. SHAW and C. STEWART: *Syncretism and Anti-Syncretism: the Politics of Religious Synthesis* (London 2005) 2-3.

¹³⁵ SHAW and STEWART: *Syncretism and Anti-Syncretism*, 2-3.

and societies and that syncretism is ‘the coexistence of elements foreign to each other within a specific religion, whether or not these elements exist in other religions or, for example, social structures.’¹³⁶ From this point of view, syncretism can be a very internal tendency within a religious tradition (as previously flagged in Paul Post’s work and his mention of the bricological nature of liturgy, even in its most classical forms). This is an important basic and empirically verifiable recognition, which contributes an important element to our understanding of how syncretism is applicable to this study.

As the term has progressed, it has increasingly been used to ‘provincialise Europe’ (using the terminology of post-colonial critic Dipesh Chakrabarty¹³⁷) by making more general and, in fact, more European, the notion of syncretism, which was once seen to be something of the other, often the other as colonial subject – the ‘ignorant native’. Instead, it became clear that the label could be used for European Christianity as much as any other religious phenomena.

As the term syncretism became more queried and deconstructed, it seemed to be generally less used and was instead being replaced with other terms like ‘hybridity’¹³⁸ and increasingly being seen very much in the light of the individual contexts wherein ‘syncretism’ would have normally been the applicable label. Harvard scholar of religion and specialist in Coptic religious history David Frankfurter, says:

‘In its assumption of coherent theological systems, of irresistible religious teachings and of native passivity and ignorance, “syncretism” has been largely abandoned for such terms as “hybridity,” “heterogeneity,” and “cultural synthesis,” as historians and anthropologists try to encompass that truly interesting phenomenon, the mixture of traditions, with more critically astute sensibilities about power, discourse, and identity, and the realization that

¹³⁶ A. DROOGERS, ‘The Problem of Definition’, 10.

¹³⁷ D. CHAKRABARTY: *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton 2000).

¹³⁸ On the theme of hybridity, see H. BHABHA *The Location of Culture* (London 1997).

“mixture” is normative to religions, “purity” rare and often invented.’¹³⁹

This goes to the heart of the issue. The very term ‘syncretism’ has epistemic issues that make it impossible to employ without some difficulty. So, I suggest a use of the term (to be used alongside the important concept of ‘hybridity’ as employed by post-colonial critic Homi Bhaba and others, such as Mikhail Bakhtin) as what Gayatri Spivak (another prominent post-colonial critic) has called ‘strategic essentialism’. That is to say that, although there are problems in the perception of ‘syncretism’ as a solid category, particularly as a category that can be wielded to demonise the practices of others, it can also be a useful term to work with strategically, understanding its limitations and the need for a deconstructive analysis. Frankfurter, in a similar vein, actually suggests that, better understood, the term syncretism can even be fully welcomed back into the lexicon of the academy, in part because of the necessity to work with it as a term formerly employed to imply ‘impurity’.¹⁴⁰ By addressing this very construction, a great deal can be learned about the reality of cultural/religious hybridity (the most accurate and helpful term to employ) and the lenses through which it has often been perceived, including the lens of ‘syncretism’.

Frankfurter makes an important point, particularly relevant to a reclamation of the term syncretism for the purposes of our work here and it centres on the concept of agency, something that our turn of the century archaeologist Hasluck did not take into account and which is at the crux of the issue with the term. Hasluck, while very helpful in terms of the cataloguing of sites, was not a part of more recent thought which has taken note of the passivity often projected onto colonised peoples or, in this project, peoples such as the Turks who are culturally and ritually closely related to colonised communities. To be fair, increased awareness around this issue is relatively recent.

¹³⁹ D. FRANKFURTER: ‘Syncretism and the Holy Man in Late Antique Egypt’, in *The Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11:3 (2003) 340.

¹⁴⁰ FRANKFURTER: ‘Syncretism’, 340.

Religion as Conceptually Linked to Syncretism

Looking at the question of what constitutes syncretism as a possibly newly reclaimed term demands a more dynamic and wide view of the phenomena of religion, in a similar vein to what we have already been discussed above. If we see religion as a passing on of tradition (either at an official or less-official, popular level) then we have to refine again our view point to account for the place of ritual and religious hybridity on a variety of levels.

Very much in resonance with Grime's definition above, Kim Knott describes religion as a 'chain of memory', as so-called by Danièle Hervieu-Léger.¹⁴¹ Hervieu-Léger's work on the contemporary experience of that which has been named sacred but not religious can be applied in an interesting way to the issue of syncretism despite the fact that she is making her observations based on modern 'secular spirituality', also sometimes referred to as 'residual spirituality' or 'post-secularism'. In fact, there are etymological and epistemic connections between her notions and those of our study as seen in Hasluck's use of the term 'secular' in 1918, referring to folk ritual not firmly based in either Muslim or Christian orthodoxies, coming instead from ancient cultural traditions predating Christianity and Islam, such as the healing bath of the *peris* ('fairies') in Bursa.¹⁴² There is, then, some overlapping despite differences in the modern secularism mentioned by Hervieu-Léger and Hasluck's use of the term 'secular' for the neutral space (pre-Republican Turkey) where Muslims and Christians could experience the numinous in a sacred bath, neither Muslim nor Christian but naturally sacred. But let us leave that example for now.

Hervieu-Léger makes some very interesting observations about the modern notion of a sacrality and spirituality not necessarily linked directly to traditional religiosity. She observes that what distinguishes these modern forms of spirituality from established religion is religion's 'chain of memory' and the capacity of a religious body for 'the production, management and distribution of the particular form of believing which draws its

¹⁴¹ D. HERVIEU-LÉGER: *Religion as a Chain of Memory* (Cambridge 2000) 101.

¹⁴² HASLUCK: *Islam and Christianity*, 109.

legitimacy from reference to a tradition.'¹⁴³ This is a chain, looking back to the past and projecting forward into the future.

I would suggest that the practices I am describing here are only rarely syncretic practices because they have not produced a chain of memory and are largely a kind of momentary intersection. To the contrary, syncretism, in this sense, is a true merging of religious traditions, as seen in many places, such as Latin America and the Caribbean, where African and Indigenous traditions have merged with Christianity and reproduced to such a degree that new religious forms have been created merging, for example, ancient deities and the African *Orishas* with Roman Catholic saints via a tradition not unlike the *interpretatio graeca* in which followers of these earlier traditions found their own sacred symbolism paralleled in the acquired iconography of Catholicism. This we can call 'deep syncretism' because it is one that embeds itself within a chain of memory and reproduces itself into the future as a unique third element. Later we will delve into the levels of syncretism and processes of syncretisation as described by Colpe in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*.

While some similar phenomena have existed in the Muslim/Non-Muslim spatial encounter that we are looking at (see, for example, the tense process of aggressive syncretism that has been occurring in India in recent years, considered by Robert Hayden in his work on 'Antagonistic Tolerance'¹⁴⁴) they still remain very rare practices in the bigger picture that we are examining across the Islamic world and its religio-cultural furthest edges (the Balkans, Anatolia etc...). That is to say that entirely new forms, with merging of deity figures in the way formerly mentioned, while not unheard of, is not entirely the norm. Sir Richard Eaton, one of the foremost Western scholars of Islam in South Asia and, particularly, the Bengal, has written very interesting work on the subject of conversion and syncretism in the subcontinent.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ HERVIEU-LÉGER: *Religion*, 101.

¹⁴⁴ HAYDEN: 'Antagonistic Tolerance' 5-9.

¹⁴⁵ R. EATON: 'Approaches to the Study of Conversion to Islam in India' in R. MARTIN and C. ADAMS: *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies* (Oxford 2001) 111-123.

Having established that syncretism does indeed exist in Islamic society (as amongst all social and religious groups), here I think it's important to point out that most of the sanctuaries and practices that we are examining are not, strictly speaking, syncretistic but would be better described as ritually simultaneous. The key difference can be seen in a distinction made by Hervieu-Léger:

'A chain or lineage of belief must be in operation. Where it is not, whilst there will still be beliefs and social groups that hold them (elective fraternities) these need not become 'religious' unless there is a shared need for continuity beyond the group's present context...' ¹⁴⁶

This is a particularly important point for looking at non-mainstream religious forms that have become somewhat institutional. Let us, retaining our Anatolian focus, take the example of the Armenian Church of the Archangels in Istanbul. Over time, this sanctuary has acquired a certain sacrality for the Turks of Istanbul. As seen in the *The Independent* (London) ¹⁴⁷ article previously mentioned, the presence of Muslims has indeed become semi-formalised, one might say, within the structure of the ritual which takes place in September and includes ecstatic utterances and a belief in healing for the benefit of some present.

Examples of particularly syncretic forms of Islam arising in South Asia are numerous. The Ismailis, amongst others, have incorporated modified versions of beliefs and practices from what we have come to call 'Hinduism' even into their corpus of holy texts. See: D. KHAN: 'The coming of Nikalank Avatar: A Messianic Theme in Some Sectarian Traditions of North Western India', in the *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 25 (1997) 401-426. Lebanese scholar George Haddad has also made a study of Muslim absorptions of Christian and Pre-Christian cults (such as that of St. George) in the Levant.

¹⁴⁶ HERVIEU-LÉGER: *Religion*, 152.

¹⁴⁷ *Independent*, the (London): City Life Istanbul: Separate Communities Come Together in Search of A Miracle
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_19990920/ai_n14254813/
 (accessed 7 May, 2009).

However, following Hervieu-Léger's proposition, there is not even the beginning of an elective fraternity, which could in turn develop its own practice and an independent tradition. I believe this is because within the given space (this applies in parallel to Ephesus and other places, as well) there is an implicit acknowledgement that the Armenians and Turks are following along with the ritual in a space of simultaneity but one in which these two distinct groups with distinct affiliations and identities are present. In a sense, one could even hypothesise that the acknowledgement implicit in the Armenian priest's gesture (of passing out beads and rugs to Muslim congregants) is not only one of Muslim presence but also of Muslim differentness.

So, inscribed in the ritual is the sense of otherness, simultaneous with togetherness before the Divine, preserving the ritual space from becoming a site of complete ritual merging, to be distinguished from the examples of the Candomble and Santería traditions previously mentioned (Latin American syncretic lineages). These American/African traditions have developed their own 'chain of memory' from 'elective fraternities', distinct from the confluence of separate religious traditions that gave them birth.

Encyclopedia of Religion – Colpe, Syncretism and Further Considerations

Colpe's entry on Syncretism in the Encyclopedia of Religion compliments in some way our analysis here, although taking it in a somewhat different direction. Further, it ultimately clarifies, to some degree, the role of syncretism in this study which is considerably less than might be assumed. Colpe begins with the caveat that, in the term 'syncretism' there is no *adequatio intellectus et rei* (correspondence of mind and object) saying that, 'The concept is in principle independent of the term inherited from antiquity.'¹⁴⁸ And it is from that assumption that the term has changed and taken on a variety of meanings (pejorative and otherwise) depending on the context of its use. As such, Colpe (and those who followed up on his work) sought

¹⁴⁸ C. COLPE: *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd edition, s.v. 'syncretism' (Detroit 2005) 8927.

to further contextualise the issue. The most recent process in the study of religion began in Äbo (1966), proceeding on to a number of scholarly conferences including Gottingen and Stroudsburg (both 1971), Santa Barbara (1972) and Bendañon (1973).

With this background, Colpe goes on to say that, as one might expect, it is possible to look at syncretism in a more static way or as a process with a variety of phases. Above all, however, what is of interest is the way in which syncretism (the term is not yet critiqued, particularly, in the first entry) has manifested in a variety of ways, looking at the process as the unique factor in for understanding syncretism as a term covering a diversity of similar phenomena. Colpe mentions a few different forms of syncretism such as those in which a layer is imposed and grows, while a substratum continues (Nabatean and Palmyran religion, under official Hellenistic religion or Indigenous African tradition under Christianity). Sometimes the substratum, in fact, dominates and sometimes a number of elements are fused (Druze and Yezidi traditions in the Near East are examples given of multi-fusion).¹⁴⁹

Further, he describes a variety of forms through which this merging of religious traditions can take place, from a circumstantial and power-relational angle. He indicates a few ways through which syncretism can happen: symbiosis, acculturation and superposition. These are relatively self-explanatory. Symbiosis takes place, in cultural terms, when two cultures remain in contact and exchange over a period of time, acculturation is described as a mixing of cultures through long term conquest, and superposition is what takes place when one culture enters into the space of another and both exist together, yet one comes to dominate. For this third type, Colpe uses the example of the Aryan invasions of India and the Sanskritisation of the Dravidian religion and culture.¹⁵⁰ Nothing in Colpe's article succinctly describes the type of phenomena that we are examining in this study, as such. However, there are two points of interest. First, not only for it

¹⁴⁹ COLPE: *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 8928.

¹⁵⁰ COLPE: *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 8928.

historical and geographical relevance, but for its theoretical value, Colpe's illustration of symbiosis is interesting:

'In Asia Minor and Media in the first century CE, worshippers of the Iranian goddess Anahita lived together with worshippers of the Greek Goddess Artemis and this symbiosis lead to a limited syncretism. Other symbioses in the same part of the world did not, however, lead to any syncretism.'¹⁵¹

It is my hypothesis that in the Virgin Mary's house in Ephesus and many similar shrines, we are seeing a long-standing cultural/religious symbiosis, in which (using our main example) a society that for many centuries had a high level of Muslim-Christian interaction, developed certain ritual practices which could be seen as partially syncretic but only in a very limited way. Symbols have been absorbed, exchanged and merged, without a complete merger of religious traditions. As an example I would point to the fieldwork of Jansen as presented in the European Journal of Women's Studies co-authored with Kühl: *Shared Symbols: Muslims, Marian Pilgrimages and Gender*.¹⁵² In it, she details the practices and lives of Muslim women who have made pilgrimages to the Marian shrines of Kevelaer, Fatima and Ephesus. Interestingly, there are a few examples of what I would put forward as practices of limited syncretism. Most important is Jansen's interview with a woman named Meral from Selçuk who, along with her husband, explains that the waters of Ephesus were important for a healing in the family. Jansen notes that there is a mixture of Islamic and Christian religious objects (as with another Muslim Marian devotee) in the environment, such as icons of the Virgin hanging next to amulets with the name of Allah. At a discursive level, however, Meral's husband is clear that Muslims do not consider Jesus divine, as Christians do.¹⁵³

'Syncretism' as such is, again, only partially helpful and, if it is used, must be seen as limited to certain cases (Afro-

¹⁵¹ COLPE: *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 8928.

¹⁵² JANSEN and KÜHL, 'Shared Symbols', 295-311.

¹⁵³ JANSEN and KÜHL: 'Shared Symbols', 302.

Caribbean religions, Sikhism) and only partially valid (in part two “Further Considerations” the *Encyclopedia of Religion* includes some of the problematisations that have been raised since the initial article by Colpe). In the above example there is a limited syncretism in the employing of Christian iconography alongside Islamic calligraphy. It is limited, however, by the fact that there is no ultimate merging of two religious streams (seen in the clear delineation of separate belief systems) but instead a kind of borrowing of symbolism that is seen to be complimentary to a Muslims belief in Jesus and the efficacy of pilgrimage to Ephesus, an aesthetic that is appreciated but incorporated via a clearly distinct theology. Indeed, the capacity to bring various elements together comfortably in this way is very typical of hybridity and bricolage. The visual display of Islamic and Christian items (and one can ask whether, having been adopted by Muslims in their own way, the icons are still ‘Christian’ as such) is a literal sort of almost artistic bricolage, religious pastiche. It is also interesting because of the cultural implication of the other that can be seen in the invocation of something as distinctly Byzantine as an icon. The element of local Anatolian culture having for centuries been mixed and symbiotic (similar to the ancient example above) is interestingly present, a century after the Exchange of Populations between Greece in Turkey at the turn of the last century. Simultaneously one sees that unlike the deities of the ancient world, here there seems to be only a partial equivalence, with the invocation of some significant doctrinal differences, despite the evident artistic and ritual mixing at a low level.

Syncretism, then, is conceptually complex because, like religion and ritual, it has a variety of meanings in any given cultural setting or historical period and according to the article of Carsten Colpe, syncretism is a phenomenon that can manifest in a variety of forms. It is a fraught term because of its association with a somewhat narrow and colonial vision of ‘pure’ religiosity and as such has come to be replaced by the postcolonial notion of ‘hybridity’ (as coined by Homi Bhabha). However, some are suggesting a resurrection of the term for the purposes of its strategic use and simultaneous deconstruction.

Within the scope of this project, both terms will be employed, with attention to these larger issues and seeking, in the Ephesus and Turkish case studies, to determine whether the phenomena under consideration have elements of syncretism and to what degree.

E. Hospitality

The safe and kind reception of the stranger is, classically, something of a near-universal value but is, in a monotheistic context, intimately linked to the Abrahamic tradition and the Hebrew narratives of Abraham's reception of guests in his proverbial ancient near-eastern tent/home. Relevant, then, is a discussion of the ways in which a tradition of hospitality informs the reception of the religious other, particularly as epitomised in the Biblical and Koranic stories of Abraham/Ibrahim, moving on to more modern reflections on the subject made by two respected French intellectuals, Jacques Derrida and Louis Massignon. This narrative, because it is embedded in Islamic, Christian and Jewish tradition is in some way a part of the ambient discourse, of which we find traces in the Abrahamic traditions and is clearly present in a number of cultures and religions. For our purposes here, however, a particular focus on the story of Abraham and notions of Abrahamic hospitality is of interest because of the geographical and religious context of Ephesus and other similar sacred sites throughout the world. The traditions around hospitality are both appreciated and problematised by Massignon and Derrida's encounter with them. As the progression to fieldwork and its results takes place, this knowledge will also be of considerable use in an analysis of spatial practice in a Turkish but ecumenical context. Because hospitality is such a vast topic (potentially a dissertation of its own) I will limit myself to two aspects of the issue: First, an examination of the key story and some points (by no means exhaustive) on its relevance to Judaism, Christianity and Islam, followed by a narrative from within the Islamic tradition that extends hospitality to the specifically ritual, within spatial practice. Second, there will be a discussion of the way in which Massignon and Derrida encountered the theme, particularly as seen in Derrida's response to

Massignon, one of the most respected Western scholars of Islam in the last century.

Abrahamic Hospitality

Within the sacred texts of the three largest Abrahamic religious traditions, we have a canonical crystallisation of the phenomenon of ancient Near Eastern hospitality, which is extremely useful and of course, it is in ancient Hebrew tradition and the Torah where the story of Abraham and his hospitality begins. In the book of Genesis (Hebrew: *Bereshit*) starting with Chapter 12, Abraham is himself made a ‘stranger’ who must wander and request hospitality. The narrative reaches an interesting stage when, in Chapter 18, he is in the opposite role of host, receiving particularly mysterious guests.

Having pitched his tent at Mamre and after having a vision of a divine figure, Abraham perceives three men coming towards his tent and he says, ‘My Lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on – since you have come to your servant.’ (Genesis 18 3-5). There is an interesting ambiguity here between God and the visitors which, while highly polemical in the Jewish-Christian-Muslim debate about the notion of Divine incarnation, is also interesting simply from the angle of just how significant a guest can be. Is the guest, in some way, God? And, if so, *is this not a profoundly influential discourse within the religious worlds of the Near East that produce shared pilgrimages, acts of hosting, effectively?*

The Talmudic tradition actually approaches this with an entirely different question on the meaning of who Abraham is addressing as Lord. Rabbis Eliza and Hannibal hold to the view that the above verse beginning, “My Lord, if I find favour with you...” was addressed to God to excuse the fact that Abraham was in fact attending to the guest rather than God. In response to this Rabbi Judah says (in the palimpsestic commentary style of the Talmud), ‘Greater is hospitality to wayfarers than receiving the

Divine Presence'.¹⁵⁴ This line of tradition, even on its own, should clarify just how significant the notion of hospitality is within Judaism. If there is first ambiguity about whether the guest is an embodiment of God and some authorities within the Jewish tradition even go so far as to place service to the guest above direct service to the divine, then clearly the point is made: hospitality is radically central.

This does not restrict itself to Judaism alone, of course, and is very present in the New Testament. Pim Valkenberg of Nijmegen Radboud University and Loyola College, Baltimore, points out that there is a parallel to this sacred narrative in the New Testament story of the meeting on the road to Emmaus, in which Jesus makes a post-Resurrection appearance to his followers, disguised as a 'stranger' in Luke 24:31.¹⁵⁵ Again this reinforces the notion that great mystery, perhaps even God, appears at the door step requesting hospitality, as clearly indicated in Christian tradition, by the statement in the book of Hebrews, whereby Paul says that some, by accepting the stranger, have 'entertained angels unaware' (Hebrews 13:2). Of course there is also the very famous statement of Jesus from the Gospel of Mathew 25:31-40 that at the last Judgement Christ will say that those who have taken in and helped others have helped no less than Jesus himself. The explicit role of receiving the one in need of shelter is within the foundational texts of Christianity.

Similarly, the Koran makes mention of Ibrahim (Abraham) often and places him in a central role as a prime example of Muslimness, being seen as the first Muslim. In Surah 51 *Dhariyat* ('Surah of the Winds') verses 24-30 similarly describe the story of Abraham's reception of mysterious guests and the coinciding revelation that Sarah will bear a child in her old age. Valkenberg points out that in Turkish idiomatic expressions, Abraham is often invoked as the quintessential host and hadith literature describes Abraham as having never eaten without serving guests.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ P. VALKENBERG, *Sharing Lights on the Way to God: Muslim-Christian Dialogue and Theology in the Context of Abrahamic Partnership* (Amsterdam, 2006) 8.

¹⁵⁵ VALKENBERG: *Sharing Lights*, 9.

¹⁵⁶ VALKENBERG: *Sharing Lights*, 10.

In both the *Bihar al-Anwar* and *Mahajjat al-Bayda*, major reference texts of Hadith for Shia Muslim communities, we see interesting examples of the gravity of the host's role and its association with Abraham. One hadith of the Prophet Muhammed, narrated in the *Mahajjat al-Bayda* states, 'surely whosoever hates a guest, hates Allah, and whosoever hates Allah, Allah [likewise] hates him...' ¹⁵⁷ Again, the near equation of the guest with God is noticeable even in a Jewish and Muslim discourse that, in contrast to Christian orthodoxy, tends to emphasise the distinction between creation and Creator, further highlighting the centrality of the teaching, via what would seem to be a near-blasphemous hyperbole for Jewish and Islamic orthodoxies. The Sheikh further quotes Imam Ali indicating that Abraham, 'Was the first Prophet to host a guest' ¹⁵⁸ and confirms a tradition (which appears in a variety of places) that the Prophet Abraham/Ibrahim is often referred to as 'Abu Adyaf' or 'Father of Guests' by quoting the teaching of Imam Jafar Sadiq, 'Indeed Ibrahim was Abu Adyaf (lit. Father of Guests); and whenever he had no guest, he would go out searching for them.' ¹⁵⁹

It must be said that this, of course, is only the tip of the proverbial iceberg, in terms of hospitality in the Abrahamic traditions and a few caveats are in order: Most importantly, it is necessary to set forth a contextualisation of the concept of hospitality. Yet, there is not a direct line, as such, between these narratives and traditions and the sort of hospitality that is present in the hosting of religious simultanea. Instead, a contextualisation suggests the environment in which the practice of multi-rituality takes its place. While there may be some who consciously emulate

¹⁵⁷ A. KASHANI: *Al-Mahajjat al-Bayda*, vol. 3, pg. 32 as cited in the Khutba of Sheikh Muhammed Khalfan, of Dar Tabligh: www.dartabligh.org/web/supplement/files/18Shaban1426.doc. Accessed 16 April, 2009.

¹⁵⁸ KASHANI: *Al-Mahajjat al-Bayda*, www.dartabligh.org/web/supplement/files/18Shaban1426.doc.

¹⁵⁹ A. AL-HUWAYZI: *Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn* 1:555 (Qom 1963-1965). The teachings of Imam Jafar Sadiq are particularly authoritative because he is both regarded as the 6th Infallible Imam by Shias (and thus, himself, a giver of Hadith) and is also highly regarded by Sunnis as a teacher of Abu Hanifa, who was the founder of the *HanafiMadhab*, one of the four main schools of Sunni Muslim jurisprudence.

the hospitality of the other's ritual practice based on Abraham's precedent (or another Biblical/Koranic narrative, I have yet to see this explicitly articulated as a value that bridges the more socially focused spiritual value of receiving the stranger domestically, to the world of ritual praxis. What I suggest here instead, is that the notion of hospitality is prominently present in the discursive field and religious culture of the Abrahamic traditions and thus it informs, generally not directly, the approach to sharing spaces of worship, such as the House of Mary, between competing monotheisms. One could raise the issue of to what degree these domestic hospitality narratives are influential in public sanctuaries. There is, however, a suggestion in a particular story from the life of the Prophet Muhammed, that at times, however much not directly articulated, the leap is made from domestic hospitality to ritual hospitality.

Ritual Hospitality and the Party from Najran

One of the most interesting examples of a precedent in Islam for this particular use of ritual space is the story of the Christian delegation of Najran that arrived at the mosque of the Prophet Muhammed. This story is particularly important because Muslims regard the Koran and Sunnah to be the authoritative guides to their lives. The *sunnah* is made up of the acts and sayings of the Prophet of Islam (including the noting of situations in which the Prophet did *not* act) and is considered deeply binding upon all believers. In fact, Ahmed Ibn Hanbal, founder of one among the four schools of thought that all Sunni Muslims follow, said, "The Koran and the Sunnah constitute my religion".¹⁶⁰ It's for this reason that one must not lose sight of this fact and mistake a story from the life of the Prophet as a kind of simple hagiography. On the contrary, devout Muslims will follow the Prophet's example in even the most minute details of how to wash, sleep, carry out a sexual relationship and even how to put henna in one's beard. The *sunnah*, the prophetic example, cannot be underestimated as it is the supreme guide to life for a mainstream Sunni Muslim after the raw revelation itself. The sayings and life-story of the prophet are

¹⁶⁰ C.A.DIEYE: *Touba: Signs and Symbols* (Paris 1997) 112.

said, by Seyyed Hossein Nasr to be “the first and most authoritative commentaries upon the word of God.”¹⁶¹ Indeed, to follow the Prophet is to follow the living Koran, according to many Muslims. The two interpenetrate in mutual explanation of one another as seen in verses where the Koran comments on the acts of the Prophet Muhammed such as Surah 8, verse 17 which states, “You did not throw when you threw but God threw” in reference to a moment during the Battle of *Badr* in which he symbolically threw a handful of sand in the direction of the enemy.¹⁶² Additionally, as “living Koran” the Prophet is seen to embody fundamentally a life built on the Koran; The Prophet Muhammed is the quintessentially Koranic person as indicated by the famous narration of the Prophet Muhammed’s wife Aishah, in which she said, ‘His Character was the Koran’.¹⁶³ Waardenburg, in his work “Muslims as Actors”, however, states that all aspects of the Prophet’s example or *sunnah* are ultimately secondary as signs of Allah to the ayat (sign) of the written Koran.¹⁶⁴

Having grasped the heightened significance of the prophetic example, one can enter into the story of the delegation from Najran with a full awareness of its weight as a narrative. During the Prophet’s time in Medina a group of Christian priests and bishops, said to be of the Melkite or Greek-Byzantine rite, arrived at the mosque of the earliest Muslim community. At that time, these representatives of the church entered the mosque and desired to take part in a discussion of the Prophet’s views regarding the nature of Jesus. They were received and discussion ensued in which the traditional Islamic view of Jesus was put forth. Debate took place, of course, and the two views were seen to be distinct and mutually exclusive. The interesting fact, however, is that the Christian clergy asked that they be allowed to perform prayers

¹⁶¹ S.H. NASR: ‘The Heart of the Faithful is the Throne of the All-Merciful’ in J.S. Cutsinger (ed.) *Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East* (Bloomington 2002) 37.

¹⁶² C. WILLIAM: *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (New York 1989) 113.

¹⁶³ CUTSINGER (ed.): *Paths to the Heart*, 215. This is a well known hadith cited in the Bukhari Hadith collection, Isnad Ahmed, number 24139.

¹⁶⁴ J. WAARDENBURG: *Muslims as Actors: Islamic Meanings and Muslim Interpretations in the Perspective of the Study of Religions* (Berlin 2007) 77.

(possibly a full liturgy) in the Prophet's own mosque and he did agree, even over the objections of his own followers.¹⁶⁵ This is juxtaposed with a debate in which, clearly, theological differences were not in any way minimised. Yet they didn't necessitate a complete disruption of cult-space or total rejection of another community's right to pray and engage in the ministry of ritual. This narration is extremely important, not necessarily because all Muslims might directly cite the story as a basis of tolerance in spatial practice but because the narration puts forward a sense of the Prophet's example and, if necessary, a legal ruling on similar situations could also proceed from it in some communities. The Prophet Muhammed's precedent is one of hospitality not only for the other in a domestic setting where food and rest might be offered to the weary desert traveller, but also an offering of space for worship in a rite with theological implications (and overt proclamations) that are opposed to that of the Islamic host's doctrinal system.

The Limits and Spaces of Hospitality: Louis Massignon and Jacques Derrida

Despite the fact that this is a very interesting scenario, it is telling for its contrary implication that, despite the Prophet's openness, there is a subcurrent suggesting hospitality must have limits, as represented by the Prophet Muhammed's shocked companions. It is in this contested space of hospitality's limits (and its uncontested inclusivity) that some interesting contributions are made by Jacques Derrida, particularly as he has reflected on the work of the French Orientalist Louis Massignon (July 25, 1883-October 31, 1962) whose spirituality, activism, academic and personal life pivoted on his experience of hospitality in the Islamic world. Massignon's story, interestingly, also brought him to Ephesus as a highly emblematic city.¹⁶⁶ Here there is some insight available, if one looks at the Massignon-Derrida lineage. The intention,

¹⁶⁵ A. GUILLAUME (tran.) *The Life of Muhammed: A Translation of Ibn Ishaq's Seerat Rasul Allah* (Oxford 1968) 270-277.

¹⁶⁶ C. BARTHOLOMEW and F. HUGHES: *Explorations in a Christian Theology of Pilgrimage* (Aldershot 2004) 126-147.

however, is not an impromptu shift of course into a Derridean analysis of space or ritual, so much as to contextualise our study further by reviewing a significant scholarly contribution to the subject of hospitality, which also manifests around the themes of Near Eastern religious tradition.

Derrida has spoken of the importance of hospitality as the open reception of the other in a number of places, not the least of which is in the volume 'Of Hospitality' based on a series of seminars held in Paris in 1996.¹⁶⁷ There he addressed the issue of hospitality on a number of different levels and via a host of different issues, including the Algerian War of Independence, with some references to the Abrahamic hospitality narratives. However, in much of Derrida's reflection at that time, he relied on classical Greek examples, as reference points for his work on the subject at hand. 'Of Hospitality' was an important collection, bringing together in a more unified way, thoughts he had been sharing to some degree already in his earlier works such as 'Writing and Differance', particularly in his reflections on the work of Emmanuel Levinas.¹⁶⁸ Most interesting, for our focus on the sacred sites of Ephesus and the Islamic world is his lecture 'Hostipitality', as recorded in the volume 'Acts of Religion' edited by Gil Anidjar of Columbia University's department of Middle East and Asian Languages and Cultures. In this particular set of lectures, Derrida focuses on Massignon's work and particularly on his biography to describe something of the role of receiving the other in his work and that of inherited culture.

Louis Massignon: Devotion to Hospitality

The figure of Louis Massignon looms large in the world of what was once called 'Oriental Studies' and may perhaps be best known, in much of the world, for his four volume biography on the Sufi martyr al-Hallaj, a figure that he, paradoxically, credited for his conversion and return to Catholicism. This work on Mansur al-Hallaj earned for

¹⁶⁷ M. BAL and H. de VRIES (eds), A. DUFOURMANTELLE and J. DERRIDA: *Of Hospitality* (Stanford 2000).

¹⁶⁸ G. ANIDJAR (ed), J. DERRIDA: *Acts of Religion* (London 2002) 356.

him the *Grand Prix de Biographie* of the *Académie Française*.¹⁶⁹ Above all, however, his life was marked by the experience of hospitable reception. It is this experience and its unfolding which is informative in looking at the way Abrahamic and traditional cultures have cultivated a sense of the reception of the other, as experienced through the eyes of a Westerner who became something of an apologist for radical hospitality, while also demonstrating its inevitable limits. He, like many of the other thinkers that inform this project, is useful for his capacity to traverse the liminality of different cultural systems and bring back something of an insight that can be shared by Western investigators. Edward Said, in his seminal work 'Orientalism' has written of him as an orientalist who, despite having somewhat eccentric and mystical ideas (according to many who found that this made him somewhat anomalous to the mainstream academy)¹⁷⁰ had great value for his capacity to step out of the typical orientalist's colonial political consciousness. He is relevant because, via his life story and work, he developed an idealistic view of hospitality, first through his personal experience of its power and then through his spirituality and social activism which demanded a radical acceptance of the other and even a substitution of oneself and one's most cherished possessions for the guest.¹⁷¹ In this way, he made a statement in favour of Christian-Muslim understanding via a Christian-Hallajian discourse of substitution and sacrifice.

Massignon was born on July 25th 1883 in Nogent-Sur-Marne, brought up by his mother Marie Hovyn and father Fernand Massignon who, besides having been a doctor, was also a noted artist.¹⁷² His interest in Africa and the 'East' began while he was in

¹⁶⁹ Al-Ahram Weekly: 'In the Tracks of Louis Massignon': <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/774/bo6.htm> (18 April 2011)

¹⁷⁰ E. SAID: *Orientalism* (New York 1978) 265.

¹⁷¹ He drew, of course, on events as ancient, visceral and difficult to fathom (from a modern western standpoint) as the story of Lot's offering his daughters to the rapists of Sodom and Gomorrah. In our current understandings of biblical criticism, liberal religious trends, notions of human rights etc... some of his reference points might seem strange. If, however, that can be bracketed, the overall message will be better accessed.

¹⁷² WAARDENBERG: *Muslims as Actors*, 158 and J. KRIPAL: *Roads of Excess, Palaces of Wisdom* (Chicago 2001).

adolescence, a not unusual happening in a European context that was very deeply intertwined with colonialism and a developing orientalist tradition. From there forward, his trips to the Arabic speaking world would change his life. He began travelling in 1901, with a trip to Algiers, began his studies in a variety of subjects, including Sanskrit, at the Sorbonne and also went to Morocco in 1904, where (as with other parts of his biography) a mysterious and dangerous event took place, after which he was convinced that he must learn Arabic.¹⁷³

Massignon, during a period of living and travelling in the Middle East, suddenly found himself in danger when on a journey to Najaf and Karbala. The current political crisis in Turkey (The Young Turk Revolution of 1908)¹⁷⁴ reverberating in Ottoman Mesopotamia, lead him to be deported back to Baghdad where it was rumoured that he was going to be accused of the very serious crime of espionage. While being sent back to Baghdad, Massignon claimed to have an experience with the Sufi martyr al-Hallaj.¹⁷⁵ In this entire process, despite the danger involved, he was supported and helped by the Alusi family which had taken him in.¹⁷⁶ He believed that he survived the ordeal and escaped possible death because of the intercession of al-Hallaj, whose life he was researching, and through the prayers and help of the Alusi family, amongst other intercessors.¹⁷⁷ So, deep was his gratitude that, besides the theme of al-Hallaj himself, much of his life from then on was spent in some way focusing on the notion of hospitality, a concept that lead him to take the name 'Ibrahim' when he became a tertiary of the Franciscan order, after his return to the Catholic fold¹⁷⁸, following what he saw as the miracle of being saved from danger during the time he was accused of espionage.

¹⁷³ WAARDENBERG: *Muslims as Actors*, 158.

¹⁷⁴ A. KANSU: *The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey* (Leiden 1997).

¹⁷⁵ Al-Ahram: <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/774/bo6.htm> (accessed 17 July, 2011).

¹⁷⁶ Y. SHERWOOD, K. HART, *Derrida and Religion: Other Testaments* (New York 2005) 82.

¹⁷⁷ Al-Ahram: <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/774/bo6.htm>, (accessed 17 July, 2011).

¹⁷⁸ VALKENBERG: *Sharing Lights*, 25.

A great deal could be said about Massignon's life that might be of interest. However, the most helpful information is that, through these crises and series of mystically understood events, Massignon came to an important conclusion: spirituality is the reception of the other to such a degree that one might even substitute one's own being for that other, as he saw demonstrated by Jesus, al-Hallaj, the hospitality of the Patriarch Abraham, the Alusi family and Muslim peoples generally. On this theme, he would go on to found the *Badaliyya* with a Cairene Catholic woman by the name of Mary Kahil, in order to live out a religious goal: the offering of Christians of themselves as mystical substitutions for the souls of Muslims.¹⁷⁹ He saw this as the final sacrifice of the host for the guest. As Derrida explains:

'The concept of substitution will be found everywhere in Massignon's spiritual itinerary. It is the first movement of absolute hospitality...The word *hostage* appears immediately,¹⁸⁰ with a particular connotation, in order to designate who they are—who we are—who offer ourselves and commit ourselves, we who offer ourselves as a pledge.

But Massignon has also been of interest to Derrida and others because hospitality was for him more than a biblical or mystical notion. It so coloured his entire life that he saw the issue everywhere, not least in the world of politics and the relationships between the West/Christianity and Islam/the Islamic world. At a time when he was speaking on the issue of Palestine, Zionism and French and European colonialism in the Islamic world, Massignon wrote:

'The hôte¹⁸¹ is the messenger of God (*Dheif Allah*). Abraham's hospitality is a sign announcing the final completion of the gathering of all nations, blessed in

¹⁷⁹ VALKENBERG: *Sharing Lights*, 25.

¹⁸⁰ DERRIDA: *Acts of Religion*, 356.

¹⁸¹ 'host' or 'guest'.

Abraham, in this Holy Land which must be monopolized by none...'¹⁸²

Massignon's determination to extend himself for the other was both Christian and Hallajian in its acceptance of suffering (of course, these are two very different examples, but in Massignon's terms, less so):

'To recognize the sacredness of life and of every human being, regardless of their differences, means to be capable of recognizing oneself in everyone, "in an overstretched trial of painful love" writes Massignon, "in a hyperextension of self for mental identification with the other's need; when one cannot help him except by sharing, mentally, so poorly his pain. By tears if one cannot afford blood, by the burning of his hunger, if one's breast cannot give him the milk of human kindness. Tears and blood, milk and fire are the mean of the housekeeping, of the immemorial rite of hospitality and the rite of asylum.'¹⁸³

This was an activism seen by him as visceral, painful even, and certainly not contained by street demonstrations or the signing of petitions. Not surprisingly, Massignon also drew on Marian symbolism, alongside that of hospitality to explain his activism, as he became increasingly Gandhian and focused on opposing the violence of the French-Algerian conflict:

'He seems to have understood his own religious vocation as profoundly connected to human relationships. As his scholarly research plumbed the depths of these connecting themes and images, his views of the world expanded, leading him to live out his convictions through social action. Imaging God as the stranger who comes to our door begging

¹⁸² DERRIDA: *Acts of Religion*, 373, citing Massignon's 'Prayer of Abraham'.

¹⁸³ D. BUCK: 'The Theme of "Le Point Vierge"' in the Writings of Louis Massignon' paper given at: 'Louis Massignon: The Vocation of a Scholar', Notre Dame University, October 2-5, 1997, <http://www.dcbuck.com/Talks/Massignon.html> accessed 21 April, 2009.

for food and shelter, or the refugee who struggles to speak our language, or the poor and marginalised in our society, Massignon envisions Mary, who was also an outcast in her society. She represents the sacred hospitality in the center of every human soul that welcomes the stranger God.

Massignon struggled for Muslim refugees in France experiencing them with compassion as friends and religious brothers because of their common heritage through Abraham and Mary.'

As would also follow, Massignon even saw hospitality as linked to a mystical practice in producing a discourse of spiritual social activism:

'Massignon expands his vision of The Virgin Heart suggesting that by 'providing hospitality to God in our hearts we enter the path toward mystical union and thereby risk becoming witnesses, and even outlaws, as did Hallaj. He speaks of a secret place in each human soul that we cannot betray because God alone has access to its hospitality...'¹⁸⁴

Massignon was most active against the Algerian War and on behalf of the Moroccans and Palestinians. He demonstrated alongside Sartre and did sometimes experience fierce opposition, such as the incident in 1958 when he almost lost an eye after being attacked during a demonstration.¹⁸⁵

This notion of hospitality, then, was all pervasive whether cultural, scholarly, mystical, exoterically religious or political and it is for this reason that Massignon is here invoked. Yet, despite a few important thematic threads of connection to the topic of multi-ritual space, one might be tempted to ask why exactly Massignon (and those, like Derrida, who have commented on him) would be of relevance in this discussion. Quite simply, an understanding of Massignon is an exercise in

¹⁸⁴ D. BUCK: 'The Theme of "Le Point Vierge"'.

¹⁸⁵ DERRIDA: *Acts of Religion*, 368.

consciousness expansion. Particularly for those in a Western and potentially secular context, hospitality could be confused with a sort of quaint and old fashioned set of conventions on how to receive guests, serve dinner etc...For the cultural context of the Islamic world to which we are connecting in this project, it is a far deeper transcendent and human reality, so transformative as to be taken up by a scholar such as Louis Massignon as perhaps the chief theme of his life, upon encountering it in the Baghdad of his youth. As an exemplar on this theme, and with the previous introduction to hospitality as an Abrahamic virtue, Massignon opens doors, even where he is critiqued.

Derrida: Hospitality and Its Limits

As we have seen with the story of the clerics from Najran, hospitality is also interesting for its limitations and the reality that it may mask an underlying tension, as pointed out by Derrida who mentions that in Arabic (as with the connections etymologically between host/hostage/hospitality) there is an etymological connection between the stranger, whom one might receive hospitably, and the enemy, reflecting on the French hôte and the analogous terms Arabic terms *jiwar* and *dakhil*.¹⁸⁶

Further, Derrida has pointed out that Massignon never fully embraced Jews in the way that he offered hospitality to the Arab and Muslim other and Massignon admitted to struggling with his own Anti-Semitism.¹⁸⁷ At the very conference in Capri (28 February – March 1, 1994) at which much of the discussion on the issues of religious pluralism and hospitality were discussed, Derrida is forced to point out that there are no women, no Muslims and that sexual orientation and gender are not being discussed, two issues on which, he said, the Abrahamic traditions have been particularly inhospitable. Moving away, a bit from the Derridean focus, there is also the work of Robert Hayden on antagonistic tolerance (a term coined by him in the field of Anthropology) in which Hayden suggests that much of what appears to be a hospitable religious pluralism can in fact hide an underlying

¹⁸⁶ DERRIDA: *Acts of Religion*, 401.

¹⁸⁷ DERRIDA: *Acts of Religion*, 418-419.

aggression between religious traditions often lying unnoticed until times of overt conflict.¹⁸⁸

This is perhaps the most relevant point raised. In large part, Derrida's work is not pivotal to this research, yet here, where he respectfully but insightfully queries Massignon's almost violently passionate hospitality there is an important highlighting of where hospitality to the other is not always the perfect model it appears to be, whether at religious sites or more generally. It is as if he were to in dialogue with Massignon, ratifying Massignon's own affirmation of hospitality's centrality, while simultaneously chiding him for not seeing the fuller implications for the host of the other, remaining in a traditionally religious framework that effectively denies hospitality to many. As a further contribution, Derrida posited that all terms imply other different and opposed concepts: 'If every concept shelters or lets itself be haunted by another concept, then no concept remains in place any longer'.¹⁸⁹ Further, connecting his notions of deconstruction and hospitality, he says: 'each concept opens itself to its opposite, reproducing or producing in advance, in the rapport of one concept to the other, the contradictory and deconstructive law of hospitality. Each concept becomes hospitable to its other.'¹⁹⁰ Similarly, he draws parallels with a number of structural and linguistic issues on a number of fronts, to the notion of hospitality both in its helpfully illustrative parallels (as above) and in its more queryable aspects, as the concept of hospitality is interrogated.

However, there must be a line drawn here. As this key concept is applied in this project, there will indeed be questions of how far the other can be received, particularly in the multi-religious sacred space. After all, as Derrida has pointed out, to receive the other is to presume oneself to be the host and thus to be a holder of power¹⁹¹, a power that often delineates limits while welcoming, whether that is in limiting Islamic ritual (but not pilgrimage) to a separate space in the House of the Virgin Mary or welcoming Muslims into the main sanctuary of the Church of

¹⁸⁸ HAYDEN: 'Antagonistic Tolerance', 208.

¹⁸⁹ DERRIDA: *Acts of Religion*, 362.

¹⁹⁰ DERRIDA: *Acts of Religion*, 418-419.

¹⁹¹ DERRIDA: *Acts of Religion*, 356.

the Archangels by offering rugs and beads. But I must emphatically hasten to make the distinction that some of the deeper layers of linguistic structural analysis are not here of interest, except in passing. Instead what must be taken from Derrida (and his encounter with Massignon) is his desire to widen the discourse and to continually ask what hospitality really means, seeing how we can apply such questions to sacred place as the key structure and phenomenon for this investigation over that of the *logos* and the structure of communication, which is Derrida's focus.

Both Derrida and Massignon are significant in this regard because although being self-described outsiders to the Arabic-speaking world (to varying degrees...Derrida was, of course, an Algerian) they saw something very key from their positioning at a liminal East-West, North-South, Christian-Muslim, Francophone-Arabophone, crossroads. In large part, both chose to convey across this threshold a sense of Arab and Muslim hospitality, as a value that held within it important discourses that could positively affect Europe, the West and Christianity. That is, they seemed to be attempting transference of knowledge from emic to etic levels, conveying a quality of receptivity and hosting that is difficult to understand in its depths, outside the context. Whether or not Massignon with his activism and religiosity or Derrida with his subtle post-structuralist analysis and advocacy of inclusion actually convey hospitality as a value in Arabic and Islamic cultural zones, the more core issue is one of the underlying streams in the assumptions of Derrida and Massignon: That is the unarticulated fact that this must be conveyed at all, that this value placed on hospitality is somehow particularly stronger amongst another people. For that reason, it must be noted here as well that the reader from outside the shared pilgrimage context may not, in fact, have ever quite experienced the quality of hospitality under consideration. It is, therefore, helpful to have at least a discursive sense of its role and to be reminded of the boundary crossing importance of the subject as a conveyance of an emic understanding of life and the intersubjectivities present in shared pilgrimage.

Conclusion

Research on spaces of simultaneous rituality requires a wide range of equipment. Chiefly, I am approaching the subject with the intention of bringing a number of voices to analysis, many of which come from somewhat distinct fields but which all have something to contribute to the ritological analysis of religion, ritual and space. One could describe this project as uncovering a lesser acknowledged (subaltern) story of the hospitable and sometimes less than hospitable reception of the religious other(s) so that those other(s) and host (although in some cases one simple host cannot be determined) can be understood. In order to do this, we must not only understand the subject of sacred hospitality but the underlying issues of potential syncretism/hybridity and the even more fundamentally epistemic questions regarding the nature of ritual, religion, space, place and the complex cultural issues that complicate the communication of meaning on these issues. Taking Bell, Knott, Asad, Lefebvre, Grimes, Colpe, Derrida and Massignon, amongst others, as indicators, alongside a historical topographical contextualisation, it is possible to go better equipped into the formulation of a hypothesis and from there to the field to look at Ephesus as a key site (always seen in light of similar others) for the convergence of Muslim and Christian ritual repertoires in one location.

Chapter 3

Ephesus in Perspective: History and Geography



'I have set eyes on the wall of lofty Babylon on which is a road for chariots, and the statue of Zeus by the Alpheus, and the hanging gardens, and the colossus of the Sun, and the huge labour of the high pyramids, and the vast tomb of Mausolus; but when I saw the house of Artemis that mounted to the clouds, those other marvels lost their

*brilliancy, and I said, 'Lo, apart from Olympus, the Sun
never looked on aught so grand.'*¹⁹²

Antipater of Sidon (2nd Century BCE)

Being a city of great antiquity, it is not possible to approach the context of Muslim-Christian ritual space in Ephesus, without a basic knowledge of its multilayered past. What is particularly challenging is the fact that the remains of Ephesus and the village of Selçuk, of which it is now a part, leave very little that would convey a sense of the city's former grandeur. As a major metropolis and economic centre of the ancient world, it hosted early peoples of which we know little, the Ancient Greeks, the invasions of Alexander the Great and the Persians, the Romans, an ancient Jewish community, the earliest Christians, the Byzantine Empire, the Seljuk and Ottoman empires and is now part of modern Turkey. Most recently, particularly because of the House of the Virgin Mary, it has come to stand for a certain spiritual commonality between Islam and Christianity and, specifically, the Roman Catholic Church. In order to see how this unique ritual and archetypal space developed, we will examine the geography and history of Ephesus, turning then to focus on its ritual and religious heritage as the home of Artemis Ephesia, finally moving on to an understanding of the role of the city after the goddess in Christian, Byzantine and Muslim Anatolia.

A. Topography

Ephesus has historically been located (with some variation) on the West coast of Anatolia, on the Aegean Sea and at the end of the Cayster River. Its landscape is dominated by three hills which are now called by the Turkish names *Ayasoluk*, *Panayir Dag*, and *Bülbül Dag*. It is on the slopes of these hills and the valleys between them that the city of Ephesus was built.

Because Ephesus is a harbour city and the silting of the harbour has consistently caused some difficulty to its residents, it is believed that the city moved location three times during its early

¹⁹² W. R. PATON: *The Greek Anthology* IX (Cambridge 1970) 58.

history.¹⁹³ The silting of the harbour crippled Ephesus' role as one of the most important trade hubs in the region and for this reason Lysimachus rebuilt the city (c.290 BCE) entirely, moving it inland and renaming it 'Arsinoeia'.¹⁹⁴ Because the inhabitants were unwilling to move, Lysimachus flooded the streets of the city by blocking the sewers.¹⁹⁵ Lysimachos' site was the city of Ephesus for over a thousand years. However, topographical problems did continue and according to documentation from the reign of Attalus II, the government maintained a series of laws favouring the upkeeping of the harbour and dams and severely punishing any acts endangering them.¹⁹⁶

At the time that the Byzantine walls were erected in the 7th or 8th Century, it appears that the harbour was still in use to some degree because the fortification incorporates and protects the port. During these centuries, writers were still referring to the port, but by the early 9th century it is clear that it was replaced by Phrygela, two miles away, as the main port.¹⁹⁷ At that stage, a shift occurred. The place later called Ayasoluk, formerly one of the hills within the city of Ephesus, became the centre of the area that was now called Ephesus, and the former port moved three kilometres further down the Cayster River. It is this port which went on to become famous in the 14th and 15th centuries.¹⁹⁸ However, after the 15th century, it also developed a silting problem and was never again to be a significant port, being eventually replaced by Izmir.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹³ H. ZABEHLICKY: 'Preliminary Views of the Ephesian Harbor' in H. KOESTER: *Ephesos: Metropolis of Asia* (Valley Forge 1995) 201.

¹⁹⁴ D. KNIBBE: 'Via Sacra Ephesiaca: New Aspects of the Cult of Artemesia Ephesia' in KOESTER: *Ephesos Metropolis of Asia*, 144-146. Knibbe puts forward the view that Lysimachos had more political reasons for this move, including the desire to move away from the power of the temple priesthood maintaining the Temple of Artemis. He named the new city after his wife but it continued to be called Ephesus eventually, despite the agenda for his own family to be immortalised through this city which he was to found.

¹⁹⁵ H JONES (tran.): STRABO: *Geography* (Cambridge 1968) 5.

¹⁹⁶ C.FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity: A Late Antique, Byzantine and Turkish City* (Cambridge 1979)185.

¹⁹⁷ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*,185,110.

¹⁹⁸ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*,185.

¹⁹⁹ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*,186.

Classical Ephesus also lay at the end of two very key highways (amongst others) that formed a bridge between the Mediterranean and lands further east. These were the Persian Royal Road, constructed under Darius the First (522 to 486 BCE) the Archemeneid king of the Persian Empire and one of the main Roman trade routes known as the *Koine Hodos*.²⁰⁰ The location of the city in relation to these passage ways cannot be underestimated because, having been at times a Persian, Greek and Roman city, Ephesus would have had much opportunity to prosper economically via its location and cosmopolitanism.

The Royal Road in particular created an early channel of prosperity in Ephesus. Herodotus described the road as extending from Sardis in Anatolia to the Persian city of Susa²⁰¹ and it seems to have been one of the most extensive and organised communication routes known to ancient historians. The most noted of ancient Greek historians, Herodotus, described the Royal Road as nearly miraculous in its length and efficiency:

‘There is nothing mortal which accomplishes a journey with more speed than these messengers, so skilfully has this been invented by the Persians. For they say that according to the number of days of which the entire journey consists, so many horses and men are set at intervals, each man and horse appointed for a day’s journey. Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor darkness of night prevents them from accomplishing the task proposed to them with the very utmost speed...’²⁰²

Commercial and communication routes reached a significant pique from these overlapping empires sharing Ephesus as a final destination. Taking into account both the earlier development of the Royal Road and the economic development under Rome, Foss says:

‘Under the *Pax Romana*, therefore, Ephesus had grown to become a great center of trade, finance and industry. The

²⁰⁰ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 3.

²⁰¹ G. RAWLINSON (ed.): *The History of Herodotus*, Section 5 (Chicago 1952) 1.5.52.

²⁰² RAWLINSON: *The History of Herodotus*, 1.8.98.

massive and extensive remains now visible give an impression of the opulence of the Roman city with its imposing, and extravagant, public buildings and its streets paved with marble...²⁰³

According to Strabo (63 BCE – 24 CE), Greco-Roman scholar, Stoic and writer of geographical texts, these were among the most important factors in the prosperity of Ephesus: that it was located at an important harbour and that it was the beginning of the Anatolian highway.²⁰⁴ Ephesus is not only its temple but the topography which made it economically central to the ancient Mediterranean world. Heinrich Zabehllicky of the Austrian Archaeological Institute says that:

‘the importance of the harbour for the ancient metropolis of Ephesos can hardly be overestimated. The position of Ephesos as both a center of trade and commerce and a link between an important East-West land route and the Aegean Sea, was one of the most significant factors in the growth and development of the city.’²⁰⁵

It was because of the centrality of the harbour that, when it was endangered, the city of Ephesus had to be readjusted so as to not be crippled economically by the silting process.

In the pre-Roman period, Ephesus was not the lavish urban centre that it became but was instead focused on trade and the temple cult. The development of religion and ritual in Ephesus took place alongside economic growth, with the emergence of not only the cult of Artemis but of other deities such as the Egyptian cults encouraged in the Hellenistic period. Previous to that time, there were other stages of temple building including the construction of the ‘Archaic Artemision’ by King Kroissos.²⁰⁶ The Greek civilisation had earlier made its mark as a temple building culture and it was not until the arrival of Rome that we see the

²⁰³ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 3.

²⁰⁴ JONES: *Geography*, 14.1.24.

²⁰⁵ ZABEHLICKY: ‘Preliminary Views’, 201-202.

²⁰⁶ KNIBBE: ‘Via Sacra Ephesiaca’, 143.

more marked civil focus with large public buildings and paved streets.²⁰⁷

By the Roman Period (c.133 BCE to 395 CE), most of the notable landmarks of the city had been established, as a result of its investment with special authority by Rome and the economic reforms of Caesar Augustus, which created a period of prosperity lasting until the third century (CE). These main buildings include the Hippodrome stadium, an aqueduct built by the Romans, the State Agora (or main square), the Commercial Agora (market plaza), and the Odeum theatre found further on, north of the State Agora, which could seat 2,300. Amongst other very important monuments was the library of Celsus, built as a mausoleum for the Roman Senator Gaius Polemaenus. North of the Agora is the Great Theatre, built by the Romans on a foundation dating to the Hellenistic Era against the Western slope of Panayir Dag, having a similar plan but being much larger than the Odeum.²⁰⁸

By this period, Ephesus also had several major temples (such as the temples of Hadrian, Domitian and Serapis), was enclosed in walls and had several important gates. The Gates of Mazaeus and Mithridates were constructed by the emancipated slaves of Caesar Augustus, of the same name.²⁰⁹ These were the first major gates one would see upon arrival in Ephesus, after which one would see, amongst other things, the Temple of Hadrian Zeus Olympios. In order to see the Artemision, the most famous of the Ephesian temples, the visitor would actually have to go beyond the walls of the city north of Panayir Dag.²¹⁰

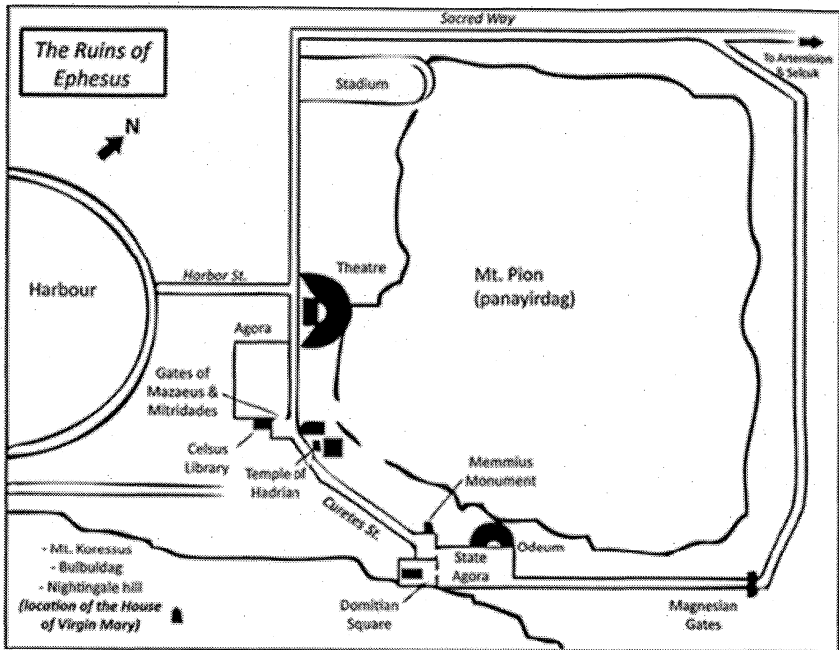
This is by no means an exhaustive explanation of the geography and topography of Ephesus. However, it should provide some sense of the placement of the city as a harbour town, built among hills and dotted with a wide variety of monuments, plazas, temples and institutions.

²⁰⁷ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 3.

²⁰⁸ University of Washington:
<http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/cities/turkey/ephesus/ephesus.html>
 retrieved 14, August, 2008.

²⁰⁹ University of Washington:
<http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/cities/turkey/ephesus/ephesus.html>.

²¹⁰ P. SCHERRER: 'The City of Ephesus: From the Roman Period to Late Antiquity', in KOESTER: *Ephesos: Metropolis of Asia*, 10.



B. History

Strabo attributed the prominence of Ephesus to its strategic positioning as a harbour city that provided an entrance to the major Anatolian trade routes.²¹¹ Strabo and the Greek historian Pausanias also wrote about the mythic and semi-mythic foundations of the city. It is traditionally said that Ephesus was founded by an Amazon by the name of Smyrna after which time the worship of Artemis was established by the Amazons.²¹² Fittingly, Smyrna came from the tribe of women known to be legendarily independent of males in traditional Greek narratives. The Amazons are described by Herodotus as women who were named as such because they were 'slayers of men'. He then illustrates with the story of the Amazons' arrival in Anatolia after escaping their capture by the Hellenes. As archetypal strong women, they were averse to the patriarchal domesticating power of marriage but did

²¹¹ JONES :*Geography*, 14.1.24.

²¹² J.G.FRAZER (tran.): PAUSANIUS: *Description of Greece* (New York 1965) 4.31.8.

eventually agree to it on their own terms, retaining the right to fight in battle and even refusing to allow the women of their community to marry before having killed an enemy male.²¹³ Such are the traditional founders of the Artemis cult in Anatolia.

In a parallel founding narrative, Apollo was said to have inspired the foundation of Ephesus by a semi-historical figure known as Androclus, son of Cordus, the last king of Athens. The legend holds that Apollo sent the muses to guide Androclus in the form of bees. Androclus was also given a vision that he should found the city in that place where he found both a boar and a fish. Upon landing at the harbour, a boar suddenly appeared. Androclus killed the boar and began settlement.²¹⁴ As a result, bees came to symbolise the city of Ephesus, Artemis Ephesia and her cultus. Images of them were stamped on Ephesian coinage, particularly in the fifth and sixth centuries BCE under the Persians.²¹⁵

Historical Early Settlement and the Greeks (Neolithic Age-133 BCE)

It is posited that Ephesus is likely to have been inhabited as early as the Neolithic Era.²¹⁶ A great number of peoples have dwelt there, including the Hittites, about whom much could be said. Here, however, we will begin mainly with the Greek history of the area in order to focus on Ephesus as a setting in which significant amounts of ritual practice have developed. It is from that period that we begin to get an outline of the role of the Artemis cult in the city's life.

Ephesus and the other cities of what is called the Pan-Ionic league (on the coast of modern day Western Turkey) were

²¹³ RAWLINSON: *The History of Herodotus*, 1.5.114.

²¹⁴ C.B. GULICK (tran.): *ATHENAEUS NAUCRATITA: The Deipnosophists* Vol. 6 (Cambridge 1959) 8.62.

²¹⁵ B. BURELL, K.A. SHEEDY (ed.): 'The Coinage of Ephesus' electronic resource, Macquarie University
<http://learn.mq.edu.au/webct/RelativeResourceManager/15043963001/Public%20Files/chapters/chapter01.htm> section 3.3, retrieved July 24, 2008.

²¹⁶ Turkish Daily News: 29, October, 2006
<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/archives.php?id=1331> retrieved 4 August, 2008.

invaded by the Lydians, having been earlier occupied by an earlier people about whom not much is known. Thereafter, Ephesus changed hands a number of times. Kroissos, as king of Lydia (Greek, again semi-mythical) reigned from the middle of the Sixth Century BCE until the region was captured by the Persians in 546, returned to a group of Greek City states called the Delian League and then taken by Alexander the Great in 334 BCE. It was ruled by Lysimachus until 281 BCE following a struggle over the rulership of Alexander the Great's empire, was ruled by the Seleucid Dynasty (Greek-Syrian) until it came in to the possession of Pergamum and became formally a Roman city in 133 BCE.²¹⁷ In particular, the periods of Persian and Roman rule were key for the role of the Artemision (the Temple of Artemis) in Ephesian life and the growth of the city's importance as a ritual/economic centre, respectively.²¹⁸

The earliest Greek settlements are believed to have begun during the second Millennium BCE and to have expanded via further colonisation around 700 BCE. There was a three way division of these Hellenic communities with Aeolian cities in the north, Ionian cities in the middle and Dorian Cities in the south. Ephesus belonged to the Ionic cities, as previously mentioned.²¹⁹ However, the Greeks were not the first to settle here and were not the only ethnic community even after their settlement, having met and mixed with communities more native to Anatolia and Phoenician traders.²²⁰

Further on we will look at the role of King Kroissos who was a prominent, debatably semi-historical figure of the Hellenic period (Greek civilisation prior to Alexander the Great) reigning from 560 to 546 BCE in Anatolia, with his capital at Sardis. For the purposes of our theme, he is relevant because he was said to be an early patron of the traditions which developed into the Artemis

²¹⁷ A. RANSON: *Academic American Encyclopedia* :Vol. 7 s.v. 'Ephesus' (Princeton 1980) 216.

²¹⁸ C. EVANS and S. PORTER: *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove and Leicester 2000) 318.

²¹⁹ University of Washington:

<http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/cities/turkey/ephesus/ephesus.html>,

²²⁰ University of Washington:

<http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/cities/turkey/ephesus/ephesus.html>.

cult in Ephesus.²²¹ Outside of his relevance to the temple tradition, Kroissos was the last king of Lydia and is most famous both for his vast wealth and conquering and uniting large parts of Anatolia. Most famous of all is the narrative of his defeat by Persian emperor Cyrus the Great in 546 BCE after consulting the Oracle of Delphi who said that, should he attack the Persians, a great empire would fall. Little did Kroissos know that this empire would be his own, according to the traditional narrative.²²²

Until the 6th Century (BCE) when Ephesus was captured by the Persians, the city had been part of the Greek Kingdom of Lydia and remained largely Greek by culture until its recapture by the Greek-Macedonian Alexander the Great.²²³ After the passing of Alexander the Great, a struggle between the generals took place which ended with Lysimachos as the leader of Ephesus until 281 BCE. Lysimachos made an important impact on the city, chiefly because he decided to move it, as earlier mentioned.²²⁴ Lysimachos was succeeded by the Greek Seleucid dynasty which, as we shall later see, brought the Jewish community to Asia Minor.

Rome (133 BCE to 395 CE)

During the Roman period, Ephesus was made the capital of the province of Asia rather than Pergamum, the coastal Anatolian city which had previously held that position.²²⁵ Ephesus continued to prosper and take on a central role under Roman rule in what we have come to call the Middle East. Historians have described Ephesus as the most important city of the wealthiest region of the Roman Empire²²⁶ and, in fact, Ephesian coins and public

²²¹ KNIBBE: 'Via Sacra Ephesiaca', 143.

²²² C. PARADA: <http://homepage.mac.com/cparada/GML/Croesus.html> (retrieved 18, August, 2008) taken from the work of C. PARADA: *A Genealogical Guide to Greek Mythology* (Jonsered 1993).

²²³ University of Washington: <http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/cities/turkey/ephesus/ephesus.html>.

²²⁴ University of Washington: <http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/cities/turkey/ephesus/ephesus.html>.

²²⁵ EVANS: *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, 318.

²²⁶ G. HAWTHORNE and R. MARTIN: *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove and Leicester 1993) 249.

inscriptions often described the city as the 'first and greatest metropolis of Asia'.²²⁷ Without a doubt, most great cities have had a sense of self-importance. However, we can at least see here that the Ephesians maintained the belief in their importance with some basis in its historically verified role as a centre of trade and other activity. On this, most historians agree. Philostratos, however, also quotes Apollonius of Tyana as saying that Ephesus, '...stretched herself out to the sea outgrowing the land on which she is built, and is filled with studious people, both philosophers and rhetoricians, thanks to whom the city owes her strength...' ²²⁸ That is to say that Ephesus was diverse, being not only an important commercial centre but also a centre of learning, generally a hub of important activity and, of course, also the home of a grandiose temple.

C. Jewish and Early Christian Communities

Like any great city in the Mediterranean region, Ephesus had a Jewish population. As in many other places, the spread of Christianity would have, very logically, followed along the previously laid tracks of Jewish communities that would have been amongst the first to receive the earliest Christian evangelists. Clive Floss states in his 'Ephesus After Antiquity', 'Christianity in its early days was preached among the Jews of the diaspora, and its early growth in Ephesus shows the extent of the Jewish community there.'²²⁹ The overlapping between religious traditions in this city, then, has been prominent in more than recent history.

Much of what we know about the Jews in Asia Minor comes from Josephus, who quoted the documents of Antiochus III.²³⁰ Josephus wrote of the settlement of 2,000 families (around 10,000 individuals) who were from Jewish communities in Mesopotamia and Babylon, brought to Asia Minor by the Seleucid Dynasty. The reasons for this transfer were many. It is believed that the

²²⁷ KOESTER: *Ephesos: Metropolis of Asia*, 34.

²²⁸ C. JONES (trans.) PHILOSTRATUS: *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (Cambridge 2005) 8.7.8.

²²⁹ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 45.

²³⁰ TREBILCO: *Jewish Communities of Asia Minor* (Cambridge 1991) 5.

Seleucids saw the Jews of Mesopotamia and Babylon as loyal subjects who would reinforce Seleucid authority in Asia Minor and were, in fact, strategically settled near fortresses and other important locations when they came to Asia Minor.²³¹ Trebilco is of the opinion that these Jewish communities, besides being seen to be loyal to the Seleucids, were also known as effective soldiers and were more adjusted to life in a non-Jewish environment, having come to Asia from the Diaspora rather than Palestine. They were found in various parts of Anatolia, but mainly in the regions of Phrygia and Lydia (where major cities like Sardis and Ephesus were located).²³² Throughout Anatolia, the Seleucids offered a very attractive option, allowing the Jewish community to live entirely by its own laws and offering land on which to reside.²³³

Ephesian Jews were, to the chagrin of many of their non-Jewish contemporaries, granted many basic and important rights to freedom of religious expression, as they would now be termed, even into the Roman Period.²³⁴ It is also worth noting that the Ephesian Jewish community was particularly prosperous, according to some historians, because it remained loyal to the Roman Empire when Jewish revolts were taking place elsewhere. The Jews of Anatolia/Asia Minor were not significantly involved with the revolts in Palestine (66-70 AD) or the later revolts in Egypt, Cyprus and other parts of the Roman Empire. According to Trebilco, despite resistance from other Roman cities, the rights of the Jewish community in Ephesus were upheld by the state for these reasons.²³⁵

The rights accorded to the Jewish community in Ephesus, while now thought of as universal rights to religious expression, were not at that time considered to be inalienable in many places. Under Rome, the Jews were allowed to form community and formal meetings.²³⁶ They were also allowed to protect their observance of the Sabbath, use their own currency and refrain from

²³¹ TREBILCO: *Jewish Communities*, 6,38.

²³² TREBILCO: *Jewish Communities*, 6-7.

²³³ TREBILCO: *Jewish Communities*, 6-76.

²³⁴ TREBILCO: *Jewish Communities*, 8-12.

²³⁵ TREBILCO: *Jewish Communities*, 32-33.

²³⁶ W. WHISTON: F. JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities of the Jews* (London 1860) 14.10.8.

military service.²³⁷ Previously these rights had been contested under the Greeks and during the Roman era there was even some concern from prominent citizens of other cities that the Ephesians extended too many rights to their Jewish community.²³⁸

Considering that Asia Minor is geographically close to the Holy Land and that it flourished both as a financial centre of empire and a centre of security for the growth of the Jewish community, above and beyond other parts of Rome's empire, it certainly makes sense that it would be seen as a major stop for Jews heading into the diaspora and, as previously pointed out by Clive Foss, it was a natural stopover for the early Christian missionaries who sought converts via the trail of Jewish migration.

It seems clear that Jewish life was flourishing in this period to such an extent that Ephesus would be a logical destination in the geographical expansion of the followers of Jesus. After all, both the Apostles Paul and John were believed to have preached there and in the more extended hagiographies we learn that Mary Magdalene and other disciples are said to have been buried there before eventually having their relics transferred to locations that played a more central role in the Christian world later on.²³⁹ For the purposes of our study it is of course vitally important that it is also believed (with fluctuating persistence) that John brought the Virgin Mary here in the city where a Jewish-Christian centre had developed through the preaching of the early Christians.²⁴⁰

Sharing Space – Jews and Christians

Shared pilgrimage was not unknown in the Near East earlier than Islam, of course. In fact, the era in which Christianity came and settled closed to the Jewish Anatolian communities is of particular interest when examining examples of the sharing (and even merging) of ritual space. As we have seen, the Jewish community had a strong and stable presence in Anatolia but this would not

²³⁷ WHISTON: *Antiquities of the Jews*, 16.6.1-7.

²³⁸ TREBILCO: *Jewish Communities*, 32.

²³⁹ C. FOSS: 'Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor', in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 56(Washington D.C. 2003) 138.

²⁴⁰ LIMBERIS: 'The Council of Ephesos', 325-327.

necessarily prove to be a positive reality for many Christian leaders in the Patristic Era. It appears that there was not an entirely clear line between church and synagogue for many believers. In his work on the Jewish communities of Asia Minor, Trebilco draws on the writing of Ignatius of Antioch (35-110), one of the Church Fathers, to warn against 'Judaising'. This was considered a heresy that could manifest in many ways but was most obviously a tendency on the part of Christians to practice Judaism to some degree or another. Ignatius raised a number of issues in his letters to churches in Asia Minor that both teach and express concern. Amongst other things, he wrote critically of those who hold the view that they can only accept what they find in the Gospel if it is also found in the 'archives' or the Hebrew Scriptures and those who observed the Sabbath on Saturday rather than the 'Lord's Day', Sunday.²⁴¹

Trebilco suggests, corroborated by various historians, that these 'Judaising' trends were not maintained by lineages of early Christians that had kept such practices so much as they were the result of the presence of the Anatolian Jewish communities. This wider Jewish community was the context but, in fact, in the case of Ignatius, who wrote around the turn of the second century CE, it seems to be specifically practitioners of Judaism from a non-Jewish background who were creating the problems for church leadership,²⁴² forming their own understanding and religious tenants out of a kind of Judaically influenced epistemology and ritual praxis.

Importantly for the study of shared pilgrimage, it seems that *in some places in Anatolia the practice of Jews and Christians sharing places of worship may have been the origin of this trend*. This is highlighted by such things as the hagiography of the martyr Pionius who was killed during the persecutions under Decius in 250 CE.²⁴³ In his speech from prison to the believers, he says, 'I understand that the Jews have been inviting you to their synagogues...Do not become with

²⁴¹ TREBILCO: *Jewish Communities*, 28.

²⁴² TREBILCO: *Jewish Communities*, 29.

²⁴³ TREBILCO: *Jewish Communities*, 30.

them rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah...²⁴⁴ Some scholars have taken the position that the Jewish communities of Asia Minor and Sardis in particular, were attempting to attract Christians back to Judaism in this period when Christians could only protect themselves from the demands of the Romans (such as eating meat slaughtered in sacrifice to the gods) by merging with the Jewish community, which had protected status before the law.²⁴⁵ The hypothesis put forward is that the Jewish community was allowing Christians to worship within the synagogue with the intention of absorbing them into the mainstream of Judaic religiosity.²⁴⁶ Whether or not these assumptions are correct, there is further clear historical record of the church leader's concern about Judaisation also present among Christians as seen in the canons of the Council of Laodicea which, in the fourth century CE, made mention of the association of Christians and Jews during Jewish festivals.²⁴⁷

D. The Cult of Artemis

Ephesus is, most prominently, the city of the worship of Artemis, having contributed to history the Temple of Artemis (Greek: Artemision, Latin: Artemisium) a wonder of the ancient world. In its most famous and celebrated form, the Artemision was built under the Zoroastrian Achaemenid Dynasty (550-330 BCE) of the Persian Empire but had begun previously and had seen other layers of ritual activity.²⁴⁸

The Achaemenid dynasty, as a Zoroastrian royal family, continued the practice of privileging Zoroastrianism as the religion of the empire's elite. However, this dynasty did maintain the general tolerance (which did have some exceptions) of Non-Zoroastrian religiosity throughout the Persian Empire, as exemplified by such figures as Cyrus the Great who allowed the Jews to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem, completed in 516

²⁴⁴ R. LANE FOX: *Pagans and Christians* (Harmondsworth 1986) 460-492.

²⁴⁵ TREBILCO: *Jewish Communities*, 30,31.

²⁴⁶ TREBILCO: *Jewish Communities*, 30,31.

²⁴⁷ TREBILCO: *Jewish Communities*, 32.

²⁴⁸ A. KUERT: *The Ancient Near East C. 3000-330 BC* (New York 1995) 647.

BCE.²⁴⁹ In a similar way, the Persian emperor Darius was known for both his Zoroastrian orthodoxy and his tolerance of those within the empire (especially conquered non-Iranians) who chose to venerate a variety of deities, a practice outside the pale of what he and the priesthood considered to be formal Zoroastrianism.²⁵⁰ The atmosphere was such that, at the same time as Artemis was being most fully enthroned in Ephesus, formal Zoroastrianism was fully flowering through imperial patronage and the building of sacred sites in the Persian heart-lands, under the same Achaemenian kings.²⁵¹ Toward the end of the Achaemenian period, we see in the Persian Empire the first official establishment of what we would now identify as the main cultus of Zoroastrianism, the burning of sacred fires in intentionally constructed temples.²⁵² For the sake of contextualisation, it's relevant that some scholars hold the view that this was in part a reaction to a trend amongst the Persians to the veneration of a Mother Goddess image and that the Zoroastrian priesthood endeavoured to offer a counter-symbol more in accord with Zoroastrianism's aniconic tradition.²⁵³ In this atmosphere of Goddess figures and the establishment of temple praxis, the worship of Artemis made its incarnation as the Artemision under the Persians.

²⁴⁹ M. BOYCE: *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*(London 1979) 51-52.

²⁵⁰ BOYCE: *Zoroastrians*, 58.

²⁵¹ BOYCE: *Zoroastrians*, 66.

²⁵² BOYCE: *Zoroastrians*, 63.

²⁵³ BOYCE: *Zoroastrians*, 63.



Origins

The early stages of the cult of Artemis (in its Ephesian incarnation) are said to be detectable at various levels of Ephesian history and a number of theories have been put forward by archaeologists. It appears that there are a variety of coinciding religious practices that have centred on feminine figures in the classically Ephesian region. The ancient geographer Pausanias held the view (as do many modern historians) that the worship of a Goddess at Ephesus was much more ancient than the coming of the Greeks and the Artemis narrative.²⁵⁴ In fact, while it may not be possible to know with precision the earliest ritual praxis that might be interlinked to

²⁵⁴ FRAZER: *Description of Greece*, 7.2.6.

the eventual rise of the substantial cult of Artemis there are a few clues.

First, there are traces of an early devotion to the feminine spirit of a tree. According to archaeologists, in the vicinity of modern day Selçuk, there was the practice of revering a tree spirit near a sweet water spring.²⁵⁵ There is little known about the pre-Lyidian people who maintained a presence there except that they were called the 'Karians and Lelegians' by Strabo.²⁵⁶ For some time this tree cult continued until the better documented period in which King Kroissos of the Lydians erected a place of worship that has been called an 'archaic Artemision'. It seems that the Ionians and their more indigenous neighbours maintained two separate places of ritual (the exact reason for this is not known; there may have been two goddesses or two communities worshipping the same goddess) previously and that King Kroissos made a strategic move to unify these diversified practices around one marble temple erected to one Great Goddess.²⁵⁷ This however was not an entirely original concept as the Magna Mater was already an important figure in Anatolia. Kybele, 'Mother of the Gods' was worshipped chiefly in Phrygia and, before the full flowering of the Artemis cult in Ephesus, some of Kybele's Ephesian rituals were taken over by Artemis, including her processions. Both also maintained eunuch priesthoods, although this seems to have diminished over time, as a transition took place from the earlier Kybele rites which included frenzied ritual castrations to a reform of the Artemision eunuchs who came to be seen as eunuchs through chastity rather than literal physical alteration.²⁵⁸

Narrative – The Story of the Goddess

What demands attention is the main narrative around which the Ephesian temenos is constructed and the identity of the goddess

²⁵⁵ KNIBBE: 'Via Sacra Ephesiaca', 143.

²⁵⁶ JONES: *Geography*, 14.1.21.

²⁵⁷ KNIBBE: 'Via Sacra Ephesiaca', 143.

²⁵⁸ C. THOMAS: 'At Home in the City of Artemis: Religion in Ephesus in the Literary Imagination of the Roman Period', in KOESTER *Ephesos: Metropolis of Asia*, 90-91.

Artemis. While there is no singular static story to which one can point, there are a variety of oral and written traditions that point towards an identity for the figure identified with the 'Lady of Ephesus', who existed in local Anatolian religiosity long before the coming of formal Hellenic rituality and 'Artemis of the Ephesians'.

The Dictionary of Greek and Roman Mythology and Biography explains:

It is impossible to trace the various relations in which Artemis appears to us to one common source, or to one fundamental idea: the very manner in which such a complicated mythos was formed renders the attempt futile, or, to say the least, forced. In the case of Artemis, it is evident, that new elements and features were added in various places to the ancient local mythos; the worship of one divinity is identified with that of another, and the legends of the two are mixed up into one, or those of the one are transferred to the other, whose legends then sink into oblivion.²⁵⁹

The most common Hellenistic narratives around Artemis are, however, not so difficult to pinpoint because of their recurrence in literature, the visual arts and within the composition of prayers. A few common threads are found: Artemis is one of the deities regarded as the 'Twelve Gods of Olympus' and therefore a main deity of the pantheon.²⁶⁰ While there are competing traditions regarding her parentage, she was most popularly believed to have been born, along with her twin brother Apollo, to Zeus and Leto and was, thus, often a subject of abuse by Hera.²⁶¹ She is seen in Ephesus in her universal mother aspect but in Greece and under Homeric influence we see her as the better known huntress and virgin.²⁶² As such, she was often

²⁵⁹ Theoi Greek Mythology:

<http://www.theoi.com/Olympios/Artemis.html#Encyclopedia> retrieved 10 August, 2008.

²⁶⁰ M. GREET and J. HAZEL: *Routledge Who's Who in Classical Mythology* (London 1996) 50.

²⁶¹ J. WARRINGTON: *Everyman's Classical Dictionary* (London 1970) 75.

²⁶² WARRINGTON: *Everyman's Classical Dictionary*, 75.

depicted with a bow and arrow, dressed in an animal skin, surrounded by nymphs of the forest and sometimes a stag (see image below). Besides the typical narratives of scandal within the Olympian family, the variety of stories around her often centre on incidents in which she is vengeful towards those, especially in her service, who violate their own virginity or that of another, male or female. At the same time, she is, paradoxically, the patron of childbirth and the newly born of all species.²⁶³

The classical Artemis is also particularly difficult to characterise because of her diversity in manifestation. She is both feminine and masculine, both nymph and warrior goddess, peaceful and ferocious. As nymph and a goddess associated with nature and forests, it is no surprise that she was associated with the already existing spirit of nature in Ephesus, according to the synthesising *interpretatio graeca*. Some scholars suggest that this mix of seemingly opposed characteristics can be explained by the phenomenon of layering. According to Robert Bell, the seemingly conflicting traits of Artemis are a result of a variety of goddesses being subsumed into her one image, with a particular mix of Mediterranean deities and deities from further east which often had more fierce qualities.²⁶⁴ As noted above, it is impossible to pinpoint with certainty the exact moment and in what way, two or more deities might have been combined. What is clear however, is that we have a figure emphasising the mothering aspect of Artemis, stemming from an early reverence for a nature spirit and taking on qualities from a number of other female divine beings (notably Kybele who was also associated with an image that fell from the sky) as was the flexible and syncretic way of Greek religiosity in all of its Pre-Christian periods.

To Worship Artemis – Ritual in Ephesus

First and foremost, ritual in the context of Hellenic religiosity was deeply centred on place and temple. According to Walter Burkert, 'The cult of the Greek is almost always defined locally; The places

²⁶³ WARRINGTON: *Everyman's Classical Dictionary*, 75.

²⁶⁴ R. BELL: *Women of Classical Mythology: A Biographical Dictionary* (Oxford 1991) 71.

of worship are fixed in ancient tradition and cannot be moved lightly²⁶⁵ and, further:

‘Greek Culture as a whole has been termed a temple culture for it was in the building of temples, not of palaces, amphitheatres or baths, that Greek architecture and art found its fulfilment. But from the point of view of Greek religion, the temple was by no means given as a matter of course; most sanctuaries are older than their temples and a number always disdained the temple.’²⁶⁶

The following of Artemis Ephesia did also fit within Walter Burkert’s paradigm, as a tradition that was based first in a particular natural setting and later became temple-based, remaining very focused on the local ritual space in Ephesus, having its own particular character and local mix of influences.

In this deeply locational system, ritual forms were constantly emerging. Of them, most (but not all) fall into two categories: shrines and sacred processions carried out in public and the inner more private ritual of the temple mysteries. The processions of the *Via Sacra* are amongst the better known rituals of the Artemis cult because the mysteries within the inner sanctum of the temple were secret by definition.²⁶⁷

The processions are said to have taken over the area formerly ruled by Kybele, previous Great Mother of Ephesus and Anatolia. The area surrounding Mount Pion, now called Panayirdag was a circular way through which Artemis processed, covering an area that was partly cemetery ground. This is believed to be a part of the spreading of the fecund life force of the virgin goddess even to the dead.²⁶⁸ The highly adorned statue of Artemis was brought to a series of shrines along the route during the evening on a four wheel carriage and was particularly processed through this area on certain holy days and the month of Artemis, known as ‘Artemision’, at

²⁶⁵ J. RAFFAN (tran.): W. BURKERT: *Greek Religion* (Cambridge 1985) 84.

²⁶⁶ RAFFAN (tran.): *Greek Religion*, 88.

²⁶⁷ S HODGIN GRITZ: *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century* (Lanham 1991) 32.

²⁶⁸ KNIBBE: ‘*Via Sacra Ephesiaca*’, 142.

which time prayers, singing and offerings would take place.²⁶⁹ Amongst the more important stops was Ortygia, the site considered to be the place where Leto gave birth to Artemis.²⁷⁰ There a mystery ritual took place, about which Strabo says very little²⁷¹ but which we know to have been accompanied by offerings and a play, re-enacting her birth and the concealment of Leto by the *curetes* who banged on their shields to create a distracting din. All of this was then followed by a banquet for all the participants.²⁷² Additionally, processions to the Artemision were sometimes held, lead by the most beautiful women, hunters, dogs and crowds of people.²⁷³

In a similar way, what we know of the temple mysteries is that they were also ritual re-enactments and reflections of the reality of the deity, in a perhaps more intense format.²⁷⁴ While processions were a particular emphasis of the Artemis cult (and Kybele before her), in the realm of mystery rituals we see that the Artemis cult was not one that was so different from other mystery religions.²⁷⁵

The Artemisian mysteries would have had certain traits in common with the other temple rites, to the degree that we can know about them through the historical record of their public aspects.²⁷⁶ According to Sharon Hodgins Gritz, the mysteries centred on one particular deity with whom the devotee ritually identified through the dramatic re-enactment of the deity's life, which was often a cycle of death and resurrections connected to the sowing and harvesting of vegetation, annually. Alternatively, the drama could be one of the deity's triumph over enemies. By the sacraments of the mysteries, the initiate was assured of resurrection and victory, taking the ritual and narrative to its natural conclusion.²⁷⁷ Gritz emphasises that the mysteries were heavily

²⁶⁹ KNIBBE: 'Via Sacra Ephesiaca', 142, 153.

²⁷⁰ KNIBBE: 'Via Sacra Ephesiaca', 143.

²⁷¹ JONES : STRABO: *Geography*, 14.1.20.

²⁷² KNIBBE: 'Via Sacra Ephesiaca', 143-144.

²⁷³ KNIBBE: 'Via Sacra Ephesiaca', 154.

²⁷⁴ HODGIN GRITZ: *Paul, Women Teachers*, 32.

²⁷⁵ KNIBBE: 'Via Sacra Ephesiaca', 53.

²⁷⁶ HODGIN GRITZ: *Paul, Women Teachers*, 32.

²⁷⁷ HODGIN GRITZ: *Paul, Women Teachers*, 32.

focused on ritual as a sensory and emotional form of spirituality over any particular focus on belief:

‘With the emphasis on feeling rather than thought, these cults utilized many different means to effect the emotions and imaginations of their followers: drama, acts of purification, processions, fasting and esoteric liturgies. If knowledge did have a place in the cult it was a secret or esoteric knowledge...associated with their secret ceremonies rather than to the cognizance of a set of truths’²⁷⁸

It is also a fact that the mysteries often emphasised the role of women and focused on a female deity, with the notable exception of the Mithras cult.²⁷⁹

Not all mystery cults were exactly the same, of course. In particular there seems to have been a difference in terms of the role of sexuality and unusual ecstatic practices. The cult of Isis, for example, emphasised chastity, while the followers of Kybele engaged in Dionysian dances and orgies alongside acts of mutilation and inflicting pain during the more ecstatic moments of music and dance.²⁸⁰

While one might think that Artemis’ role as a virgin huntress would have made the ritual praxis of her following more like that of chaste Isis, this is not necessarily the case. In fact, the virginal Artemis is largely (although not entirely) a product of the Homeric hymns, while the Ephesian manifestation of Artemis takes on a greater quality of the *Magna Mater* via her absorption of Kybele and her primal qualities in addition to the Artemisian narrative already centred on fertility.²⁸¹ Archaeologists debate whether or not the goddess of virginity was worshipped ritually with sex but generally it is accepted that at least lay people practiced orgies and castrations, like their earlier counterparts among the devotees of Kybele.²⁸²

²⁷⁸ HODGIN GRITZ: *Paul, Women Teachers*, 33.

²⁷⁹ HODGIN GRITZ: *Paul, Women Teachers*, 34.

²⁸⁰ HODGIN GRITZ: *Paul, Women Teachers*, 37.

²⁸¹ HODGIN GRITZ: *Paul, Women Teachers*, 38.

²⁸² HODGIN GRITZ: *Paul, Women Teachers*, 41.

While the role of sacred prostitution among the priests and priestesses of Artemis may be debated, it is at least known that the cult of Artemis did rely very much on a priesthood. As previously alluded to, one of the main symbols of Artemis Ephesia was the bee, so much so that Ephesian coins often had a large bee as their main figure (in addition to coins that portrayed the Goddess or a deer, her other symbol).²⁸³ The priests and priestesses of Artemis used this symbol extensively in their work, regarding themselves as *Mellisai* ('bees'/priestesses) and referring to the priests who took vows of purity for a year as *Essenes*, 'King Bees' or 'Drones'.²⁸⁴ The priesthood of these varied and ancient rituals, so intimately connected to the life and identity of Ephesus, numbered in the hundreds or possibly thousands.²⁸⁵

Diversity of Cult Practice in Ephesus – Other Gods

The cult of Artemis was not the only locus for ritual activity in Ephesus. A great diversity of deities coexisted in ancient and late antique Ephesus. A form of Kybele known by the title 'Phrygian Mother, Mother of the Mountains, Ancestral Mother, Chaste Mother' was revered in the same sanctuary with Zeus, Apollo and Hermes.²⁸⁶ Alongside these deities, there was also the worship of Hephaistos, Dionysios, Demeter, Hestia, Leto, Nemesis, Tyche, Poseidon and a host of lesser known deities and spirits. There is also archaeological evidence for the practice of Egyptian traditions in Ephesus, with a special emphasis on the worship of Isis and Serapis.²⁸⁷

It appears that besides the Greek cults (which themselves have roots in earlier communities more indigenous to Anatolia) and Christianity, Egyptian cults were the only 'foreign' ritual

²⁸³ B. BURELL, K.A. SHEEDY (eds.): 'The Coinage of Ephesus': <http://learn.mq.edu.au/webct/RelativeResourceManager/15043963001/Public%20Files/chapters/chapter01.html>.

²⁸⁴ FRAZER: *Description of Greece*, 8.13.1.

²⁸⁵ HODGIN GRITZ: *Paul, Women Teachers*, 39.

²⁸⁶ M. AURENHAMMER: 'Sculptures of Gods and Heroes from Ephesos' in KOESTER: *Ephesos Metropolis of Asia*, 255.

²⁸⁷ J. WALTERS: 'Egyptian Religions in Ephesus', in H. KOESTER (ed.): *Ephesos Metropolis of Asia*, 281-306.

practices to have a significant impact on Ephesian worship spaces. Some debate is still taking place among archaeologists as to whether or not there were full temples to Egyptian deities in Ephesus. All are agreed that the practice of Egyptian ritual was taking place in certain periods of Anatolian history (Third to Fourth Century BCE) based on inscriptions found in various places including the dedications of altars to Isis and Serapis and there is a high likelihood of Ephesus having hosted at least one Egyptian temple.²⁸⁸ Some scholars emphasise the influence of Egyptian rule in Anatolia and Greece whereas others point out that the Egyptian cults and Egyptian political power did not always coincide such as in Rhodes where there is a great deal of evidence for Egyptian religious activity despite a lack of political dependence upon Egypt as a state.²⁸⁹

Sharing Space in Ancient Greek Tradition

Ephesian ritual space was remarkably varied, as was much of the ancient Mediterranean world and perhaps this needs some clarification, as the Ancient Greek practice of what is now called 'polytheism' would include elements that are not now easily understandable. It is illuminative to address why there was so much flexibility in the worship of a variety of gods (even in the same location) and to what degree was such a practice might have been limited.

First of all, it must be understood that for the Greeks, the gods are without number and are translatable into any number of forms, as though there were a code to understand the pantheons of other peoples in which a Greek deity can be equivalent to a foreign one.²⁹⁰ This is sometimes referred to by scholars of the classics as the 'Greek Interpretation' (*Interpretatio Graeca*) and is explained in a very interesting way by Albert de Jong in his work *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature*. There he states that the Greeks used their 'interpretation' as an epistemological lens through which to

²⁸⁸ WALTERS: 'Egyptian Religions in Ephesus', 304.

²⁸⁹ WALTERS: 'Egyptian Religions in Ephesus', 286.

²⁹⁰ RAFFAN: *Greek Religion*, 176.

understand other people's religiosity, creating equivalence wherever possible in which one foreign deity equals one Greek deity. This even went so far as to change the very language of another people so that, when invoking their own gods, they were quoted as if they were invoking a Greek deity (a kind of direct translation). The literature gives examples such as the invocation placed in the mouth of the Persian emperor Cyrus the Great, 'Greatest Zeus we shall follow you!'. Most likely this was a Greek attempt to convey an invocation of Ahura Mazda by the Zoroastrian king.²⁹¹ This *interpretatio* was also used by the Greeks to understand the religious practices of the other, not only the names of foreign deities.²⁹² As a prime example, De Jong quotes Maximus of Tyre who wrote in syncretising language about the practices of non-Greeks and, in a very unusual way, the impossibility of creating equivalence between certain foreign practices and those of the Greeks:

'The Celts worship Zeus but the Celtic statue of Zeus is a high oak. The Paeonians worship the Sun but the Paeonian statue of the Sun is a small disk on a long pole. The Arabs worship <a god>but I do not know who he is. But I have seen <his> statue: It was a square stone.'²⁹³

The study of this practice and its ideological implications (a kind of ancient Greek 'Orientalism') is interesting and very relevant but here we want to mainly contextualise the multi-religiosity of ancient and late-antique Ephesus as a city of divinely marked spaces or *temene* and places of worship, in terms of the practice, lived and grounded religion that gives context to the later rituals under consideration. Towards this purpose, the importance of this is that it is one of the ways we can begin to understand the approach to religion in the Pre-Christian world of Anatolia, an approach that, of course, spills over into later periods of Christianity and Islam, religious strata not being ever truly contained. In this ancient context, there is no particular doctrinal

²⁹¹ DE JONG: *Traditions of the Magi*, 30,31.

²⁹² DE JONG: *Traditions of the Magi*, 30,31

²⁹³ DE JONG: *Traditions of the Magi*, 30.

problem with a multi-layered cult such as that of Artemis Ephesia, an early nature spirit that grew into a Greek goddess, also encompassing the qualities of the Anatolian Great Mother and finally becoming a largely new image with all of these elements incorporated. It seems to follow logically that, if one deity can incorporate many, surely a diversity of deities from different traditions and geographical contexts can also coexist. And indeed, this was the case.

As Walter Burkett says, 'Polytheism is an open system'. That is, it is very capable of working with elements of other religious traditions while yet (at least in the 'Greco-Oriental' context that we are speaking of in Anatolia) remaining very grounded in the local.²⁹⁴ This locality is closely connected to the belief that certain God-forms are more intimately linked with a certain land and people, however universal the deities may be, in a Greek perspective (i.e. *interpretatio graeca*).²⁹⁵ With all of its theological flexibility, the religious milieu in its earlier manifestations still saw, for example, the cult of Isis in Ephesus as inherently tied to Egypt and that of Artemis Ephesia as, even by her name, inherently Ephesian.

Over time, however, even this began to change as an international and non-ethnically based version of the Isis cult developed in the style of the Greek Mysteries. This shift from an already flexible system to an even more diverse one came with the internationalisation of many cities beginning with the conquests of Alexander the Great.²⁹⁶ Taking the example of the Isis and Serapis cults which seem to have taken root in Ephesus, we see that the geographically vast political connections created by Alexander the Great's empire allowed for an inter-cultural mix of religious and mystery ritual.²⁹⁷ So

²⁹⁴ RAFFAN: *Greek Religion*, 176.

²⁹⁵ RAFFAN: *Greek Religion*, 176.

²⁹⁶ J. Z. SMITH: *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. 'Hellenistic Religion' <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/260390/Hellenistic-religion> retrieved 20 August, 2008.

²⁹⁷ MARTIN: *Hellenistic Religions: An Introduction* (New York 1987) 78-79 Martin distinguishes between religious piety and the mystery and gnostic aspects of Hellenistic religion which were more esoteric and occult in orientation.

deep was this merging of Egyptian tradition and the Greek mysteries in this era, that the new form of Isis and Serapis worship was guided by the religious and political leaders of both communities. Plutarch's record states that Ptolemy of Egypt actually crafted the Greek Serapis rites with the help of Timotheus who was one of the priests of Eleusis. In a parallel way, Luther Martin shows that the Greco-Egyptian Isis mysteries were also shaped along the lines of the Greek mysteries and were in fact closely based also on the texts of Eleusinian mysteries of Demeter.²⁹⁸

Martin, however, does point out that one cannot reduce these practices to a mere form of political expediency or a response to shifts in power relations. He points out instead that the cosmology of Hellenistic tradition was very rich, adaptable and a suitable context for the arising of new religious forms. He also points out that the original meaning of syncretism in its classical Greek sense was not one of combining two or more realities. Instead, it indicated a certain interplay that developed when opposing forces came together, even including the dynamic that allowed two warring parties to come together for the benefit of combating a third foe.²⁹⁹ In addition, the harmonising of two religious practices was not haphazard or without complications. For example, there was sometimes a delicacy to the reality of foreign power within temple worship. For this reason, in Ephesus, Persian priests had to be dealt with carefully after the end of Persian rule, as they had come to play a role in the Artemis cult at a certain point of Persian imperial influence. This of course was an important issue in the construction of a temple that so very much represented the chiefly Greek city of Ephesus.³⁰⁰ Differences in praxis and affiliation, then, were not totally unknown, nor were all forms or religiosity completely fluid or interchangeable.

²⁹⁸ MARTIN: *Hellenistic Religions*, 79.

²⁹⁹ MARTIN: *Hellenistic Religions*, 10-11.

³⁰⁰ L LIDONNICI: *The Image of Artemis Ephesia in Greco-Roman Worship: A Reconstruction* (Cambridge 1992) 401.

Paul, John and the Decline of the Temple of Artemis

For the sake of historicity, we will briefly look at the encounter of early Christianity with the cult of Artemis and the decline of the temple, because here we encounter something entirely distinct from the aforementioned trend towards syncretism.

The New Testament records something of the early Christians' encounter with the Artemision in Ephesus in Acts 18-20. In this section, Paul is described as travelling in Anatolia, finding the followers of John the Baptist, instructing and baptising them, performing miracles and meeting fierce resistance as he attempts to evangelise the Jewish community. In Acts 19:23 to 20:1, we see the famous confrontation between Paul and the followers of Artemis in Ephesus, in which, according to the New Testament, he comes into conflict with a man by the name of Demetrius who, perceiving the threat from Paul's monotheistic preaching to his image-making craft, stirs his fellow craftsmen and members of the public against the Christians. It is recorded in the text that their outrage forced Paul to leave Ephesus.

One of the more interesting elements of the story of the silver smith riots is the way in which themes of ritual space and tolerance emerge from the text. First it is noted, in chapter 19, verses 33 and 34, that a Jewish man by the name of Alexander steps up to make an announcement (some have suggested that he wanted to distinguish his community from that of the Christians) but that, when it was known that he was Jewish, the mobbed silenced him by shouting 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' for two hours, suggesting that they were defensive of their goddess, being aware, to some degree of Jewish belief and its non-acceptance of her divinity. We then see something of the basic principles of coexistence which were present in Ephesus and the Roman system, as the New Testament authors understood it, when the city clerk arrives and attempts to calm the mob. In Acts 19:35-37 he says, first, that riots are punishable by Rome. Second, he reminds the crowd that the Christians have not robbed the temple nor have they blasphemed Artemis. This is important because it indicates (at least from the New Testament author's point of view) that only acts such as these would be seen to truly offend the religious

sensibilities in a way as to be punishable. Simple religious disagreement is not sufficient for Ephesian tolerance and multi-religiosity to be abandoned, at least as far as this passage indicates. The clerk seems to suggest that Paul, so long as he did not insult the goddess directly or take from her temple, was welcome to his opinions and preaching, that Christianity had the right to a presence there.³⁰¹ It is interesting that, however open the Ephesians and most Mediterranean communities were towards a diversity of gods and beliefs, there were limits and transgression could be punished severely. In one case, sacred garments were to be delivered by ambassadors of the Artemision in Ephesus to a shrine of Artemis Ephesia in Sardis. However, a group from Sardis attacked the ambassadors, possibly because of the politics of Ephesian power and rites in Sardis. All 45 were sentenced to death for the desecration.³⁰²

Although there is not as much known about the travels and residence of another apostle, namely John, there was at one time a great cult of his relics in Ephesus and many of the authorities of the early church conveyed their belief that John also came to Ephesus, taught, worked miracles and condemned the worship of Artemis. Those who wrote in this genre include Irenaeus, Polycrates (Bishop of Ephesus) Clement of Alexandria and Justin Martyr.³⁰³ However much the apostle John did also preach against the worship of Artemis, it was another John who came to be associated with the end of the great temple. By 381 CE, Theodosius had ordered the end of all the ancient non-Christian cults (besides, of course, Judaism).³⁰⁴ While a variety of sources give different accounts, John Chrysostom was traditionally said to be responsible for the final destruction of what remained of the

³⁰¹ J. FITZMAYER S.J.: *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentaries* (New York 1998) 654-656.

³⁰² D. W. J. GILL and C. GEMPF: 'The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting', in *Volume 2: The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting* (Eugene 2001) ch.9, and TREBILCO: *Jewish Communities*, 331.

³⁰³ S. VAILHE: s.v. 'Ephesus'. www.newadvent.org/cathen/05490a.htm, retrieved 10 April, 2009.

³⁰⁴ KNIBBE: 'Via Sacra Ephesiaca', 146. Knibbe also points out that the worship of Artemis was already in decline, giving way to other deities from Egypt and the East, Christianity and philosophy.

Artemision, in the year 400.³⁰⁵ Other historians hold to the opinion that the temple was destroyed already by this time, as a result of the Gothic invasion in 262 CE.³⁰⁶

E. Byzantium

Looking at the development of Byzantine civilisation from its Hellenic and Roman roots into a Christian Empire, it has been posited that, "The three distinct religious ideologies were not three distinct cultural phases but 'an integral process of social change each one building on and through the other...in an evolving cultural ecosystem'"³⁰⁷ While the coming of Christianity and its institutions most definitely created significant and dramatic ruptures with the past (the destruction of the cult of Artemis and its temple, listed as one of the wonders of the ancient world) it is only in retrospect that these stages appear to be solid. One need only look at the date generally treated as the founding of the Byzantine Empire which is often constructed as a definitive moment for the beginnings of an Eastern Roman and Christian state. In fact, such a beginning is not possible to pinpoint with complete accuracy because the Christianisation of the Eastern Roman Empire was not undertaken all at once. Instead, Constantine was himself not a baptised Christian until his death and only began the Christianisation of the Eastern Empire by prioritising Christians for important posts and making the state officially Christian. This was not such a strange phenomenon, however, as it seems that many Christians delayed their baptism, as was the practice at that time.³⁰⁸ The practice of pre-Christian religions continued for some time, including the worship of Artemis and other deities, although they were greatly waning in popularity in the 4th Century CE, being

³⁰⁵ LIMBERIS: 'The Council of Ephesos', 334.

³⁰⁶ *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, s.v. 'Temple of Artemis', <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/36816/Temple-of-Artemis>, Retrieved 20 Aug. 2008.

³⁰⁷ L. WHITE: 'Urban Development and Social Change in Imperial Ephesos', in KOESTER *Ephesos: Metropolis of Asia*, 29-30.

³⁰⁸ M. LAISTNER: *Christianity and Pagan Culture in the Later Roman Empire* (Ithaca 1951) 33-34.

slowly replaced by both Christianity and other forms of philosophy and spirituality, as mentioned earlier.

It is during this time of transition and the development of Byzantium that Ephesus begins to take on its particularly Christian character and becomes a centre of devotion for Greek Christianity and beyond. One of the reasons for this is that Ephesian culture seems to have had a great capacity for thriving and moving along with the forces of its time. L. Michael White, quoted above as saying that Ephesus moved through the various periods of rule in an evolutionary model, also says that Ephesus did not seem to have experienced a great deal of tumult despite the fact that the years of the 3rd and 4th centuries are often said to have been crisis periods and attributes this largely to an adaptability and capacity to absorb non-Ephesians who contributed to its further development and adaptation during otherwise stormy times.³⁰⁹

In religious terms, Clive Foss describes it as a city with the richest offerings for a pilgrim who sought, in the Asia Minor of this period, to be near those who were close to Christ, being associated not only with the figures already mentioned but also with the Apostle Timothy.³¹⁰ Pilgrims from both the Eastern and Western churches, from near and from distant locations, all came to Ephesus in the Byzantine period and beyond. The Saxon pilgrim Willibald (d.781) wrote of his Ephesus pilgrimage to all of the major locations in his *Itinerarium* and the 12th Century Russian pilgrim Daniel wrote of seeing the body of Timothy and the head of Mary Magdalene in Ephesus.³¹¹ Not only were the saints of Ephesus revered but many of the later saints in the Byzantine era are themselves documented as having been to Ephesus on pilgrimage, such as Peter of Atroa of the 9th century.³¹² The popularity of the city would have been related to the fact that this was the place where pilgrims could venerate the oldest Christian sites in Asia Minor, compared to those of more recent saints. It is also the fact that St. John's tomb was believed to be a place of supernatural powers of the highest order due to the saint's

³⁰⁹ L. WHITE: 'Urban Development and Social Change in Imperial Ephesos', 63-64.

³¹⁰ FOSS: 'Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor', 138.

³¹¹ FOSS: 'Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor', 141, 146.

³¹² FOSS: 'Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor', 138.

alleged immortality.³¹³ What is left of a modern city at Ephesus is named for St. John himself who was called the 'Holy Theologian' by the Greeks. This name, *Agios Theologos* in Greek, has come to be called *Aya Soluk* in Turkish and refers to the hill of Aya Soluk around which the new city of Ephesus was founded and renamed following its recapture from the Seljuks by the Byzantine Empire, leading on to its modern name of Selçuk.³¹⁴

And of course there was also the Council of Ephesus which, in fact, was the beginning of a decline in the ecclesiastical history of Ephesus. For the first three centuries, Ephesus was second only to Antioch as a centre of Christianity in Asia Minor.³¹⁵ According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, the Council of Ephesus which dealt with the issue of Nestorian's doctrines and, as an outcome proclaimed the Virgin Mary as *Theotokos* or God-Bearer, also had ramifications for the Ephesian metropolis as a Christian centre. Despite the fact that the Council of Nicaea had made Ephesus the chief seat of the Church in Asia Minor, Constantinople did eventually dominate.³¹⁶ While Ephesus was never to reclaim its ecclesiastical status, it did continue as a major centre of pilgrimage for centuries.

Sharing Space – Byzantine and Turkish

Interestingly, even before the advent of Islam in Anatolia, there was some interest in Christian holy places on the part of Muslims close to the Byzantine Empire. The most prominent of the Turks to make pilgrimage to a Byzantine church was the wife of the Emir of Sivas who was said to be possessed and who sought cures in various Anatolian shrines. She was first recommended to go to the shrine of St. Phokas in Trebizond but finally was cured when she spent a night by the relics of St. Athanasios.³¹⁷ According to Foss, there were also visits by the Seljuk Turks from their capital in Konya (Greek *Iconium*) to the pilgrim centre of Chonai, to do business.³¹⁸

³¹³ FOSS: 'Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor', 138.137.

³¹⁴ VAILHE:s.v.'Ephesus', www.newadvent.org/cathen/05490a.htm.

³¹⁵ VAILHE:s.v.'Ephesus', www.newadvent.org/cathen/05490a.htm.

³¹⁶ VAILHE:s.v.'Ephesus', www.newadvent.org/cathen/05490a.htm.

³¹⁷ FOSS: 'Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor', 146.

³¹⁸ FOSS: 'Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor', 146.

He doesn't indicate that the Seljuk Turks were coming as pilgrims to this place but it seems likely that some must have paid their respects at the church, whatever their trade motivations, as we see Muslim pilgrims entering churches in the later periods when they were in rulership of the former Byzantine Empire. In fact, both Christians and Turkish Muslims visited the shrine of St. Amphiliochios in Konya for many centuries.³¹⁹ Ironically, the holy oil of this saint was sought out by all despite the fact that he was initially invoked for protection against Muslim invaders.³²⁰ It seems that holiness and miraculous power can sometimes override the politics of history.

F. Islam and Ephesus

Although not a great a deal is known about the late Byzantine era in Ephesus, it is clear that during the Medieval Byzantine period the city continued to thrive. In the words of Clive Foss:

‘It was a provincial capital, a military and naval base, and an important harbour for much of the period. Its religious associations made it a major center of pilgrimage and monasticism and, at least under the Lascarids, it had some role as a center of learning.’³²¹

The earliest encounter of Muslims with the city of Ephesus occurred during a brief period of Arab incursion into Anatolia carried out in 655 and 717 by the forces of Muawiyya.³²² Ephesus did, however, remain in Byzantine hands for some many years to come until the arrival of the Seljuks in 1090 who destroyed much of the city but who lost the city to the Byzantine Empire again. With the reconquest of Constantinople by the Byzantines, after the severity of the Fourth Crusade, the Byzantine Empire largely ceased to defend much of Asia Minor for a number of reasons, not

³¹⁹ FOSS: ‘Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor’, 150.

³²⁰ FOSS: ‘Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor’, 144.

³²¹ FOSS: ‘Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor’, 116.

³²² FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 105. Foss is of the opinion that there is no proof of an Arab attack on Ephesus in 716 CE but on this there are differences of opinion among scholars. See Appendix V.

the least of which was a lack of resources. Constantinople had simply ceased to pay the border guards.³²³ A long period of war, insecurity and moving borders ensued until 1304. At that time, despite the efforts of a force of Catalan mercenaries known as the Catalan Grand Company, the city did fall to the Seljuk Turks on 24 October, 1304³²⁴ and while it retained a diversity of ethnic and religious communities for many centuries, it has consistently been a part of the Turkish Muslim world from that day until the present. Shortly after the Seljuk victory, a power struggle ensued which saw the leadership of the region change hands from Lieutenant Sasa Bey, who initially conquered the city, to a former ally by the name of Aydin. Aya Soluk/Ephesus then was incorporated into the Emirate of Aydin, within which it remained from 1304 until the beginning of Ottoman control in 1390.³²⁵

During the Seljuk Sultanate, a number of important developments took place in Ephesus/Aya Soluk. First of all, the city was renewed as a centre of trade because of a number of fortunate circumstances. Venice and Genoa were actively stimulating the Mediterranean market with a great deal of merchandise in the Aegean Sea area where the formerly dominant port of Smyrna was declining. This allowed trade with the Genoese and the Venetians to shift to Aya Soluk at a time when the harbour city was also enjoying a century without warfare.³²⁶ The most significant trade was in grain, slaves, cattle, horses, hemp, wax, cotton and aluminium.³²⁷ Aya Soluk retained its status as Anatolia's most significant port until it was surpassed by Izmir and Kuşadası in the 17th century.³²⁸

The city's Islamic heritage also developed during the Seljuk period in which it produced one of the most important mosques in Anatolia, for the period. The Isa Bey Mosque was founded by Isa, who ruled the Emirate of Aydin beginning in 1360 and who saw Aya

³²³ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 141.

³²⁴ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 144.

³²⁵ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity* 144, 162.

³²⁶ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 145.

³²⁷ Austrian Archaeological Institute:
<http://ephesus.at/eng/ausland/ayasoluk.html> retrieved on 22 August, 2008.

³²⁸ Austrian Archaeological Institute:
<http://ephesus.at/eng/ausland/ayasoluk.html>.

Soluk through yet another period of great prosperity.³²⁹ The mosque was the most significant building in the region of the former Ephesus since the time of Justinian. It built by an architect from Damascus, completed in 1375. It was said to be so grand that the Turkish historian and travel writer Evliya Celebi described it as being as large as the Aya Sofia in Istanbul and comparable to the famous Umayyad mosque in Damascus.³³⁰ In fact, the building measured 51 x 57 meters, had two minarets, two domes, a vast courtyard and a pool. Decorated with marble and turquoise, amongst other materials, it stood for the affluence of the city in that period.³³¹

The Seljuk Aya Soluk was, however, to change hands a number of times from the period of Isa Bey, being taken by the Ottomans, the Mongol leader Timur-Lang (Tamerlane) and, after a period of unrest it again became part of the Ottoman Empire in 1425, of which it remained a part until the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire between 1908 and 1922.³³² During the Ottoman period, Aya Soluk/Ephesus maintained its prosperity for some time until the historical record goes somewhat silent in the sixteenth century. From that point on Aya Soluk went into a steady decline because of, yet again, the silting of the harbour and the economic shift caused by being part of a larger empire.³³³

Fortunately, we do know something about the Islamic religious significance of Aya Soluk in the Turkish centuries because of Evliya Celebi who covered much of the Ottoman Empire in his forty years of travel and who came to Aya Soluk in the mid seventeenth century.³³⁴ Amongst the things which were of significance to him, was the fact that the cloak (Turkish: *Hırka-ı Şerif*) of the Prophet Muhammed was for some years kept at Isa Bey Mosque before finally being taken to Istanbul. In addition, the city had generally been a centre of mosques and madrasas from the Seljuk period to the Ottoman era and had produced a local holy man by the name of Shehabuddin Sivasi. Shehabuddin was a

³²⁹ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 155-158.

³³⁰ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 159-160, 174. It is, in fact, currently much smaller in size.

³³¹ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 159, 160.

³³² FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 159,160.

³³³ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 168.

³³⁴ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 173.

former slave from the Anatolian city of Sivas and disciple of a Sheikh Muhammed who was in the lineage of Zeyneddin al-Harawi.³³⁵ He became famous for having not only brought the Cloak of the Prophet to Aydin but also for authoring a number of mystical texts and Koran commentaries (Arabic: *Tafsir*).³³⁶

In the late Ottoman period, Ayasoluk not only went into decline but largely disappeared. In the 18th century the city was mainly inhabited by a small community of Greeks who lived under very difficult, impoverished conditions so unpleasant that many had to subsist in the Cave of the Seven Sleepers and the vaults of the ancient Stadium. Most of the Greek community, however, lived in Kirkindje because Ephesus also had developed malarial swamps making the area particularly uninhabitable.³³⁷ By the 19th century, the area had only 15 or twenty houses and a poorly maintained coffeehouse but even this was gone by 1824, after the Greeks of Samos entered the area during the Greek War of independence.³³⁸ It is reported that, by 1863, it was again inhabited when the English architect John Turtle Wood arrived and began searching for the remains of the Artemision, eventually discovering the marble pavement of the temple in 1869.³³⁹ While Wood's undertaking had to end prematurely in 1874, excavation began again through private donations to the Austrian archaeologists in 1895. The work continued with further funding and paused during the two world wars, finally re-establishing itself in 1954. The excavations and research have continued since that time and have contributed a great deal to this study.³⁴⁰

The process of the Ottoman Empire's dissolution, World War I, the Greek-Turkish population exchanges³⁴¹ and the

³³⁵ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 161-162.

³³⁶ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 162.

³³⁷ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 178.

³³⁸ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 179.

³³⁹ FOSS: *Ephesus After Antiquity*, 180 and website of the Austrian Archaeological Institute: <http://www.oeai.at/eng/ausland/geschichte.html>.

³⁴⁰ Austrian Archaeological Institute: <http://www.oeai.at/eng/ausland/geschichte.html>.

³⁴¹ International Committee of the Red Cross: http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/5GKE3D?OpenDocument&View=defaultBody&style=custo_print, retrieved 22 August, 2008.

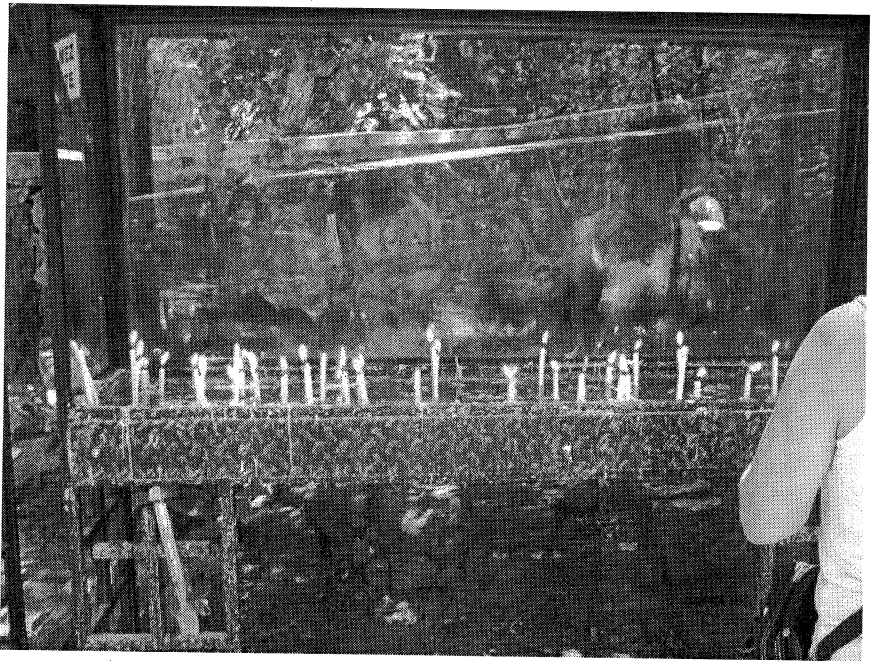
establishment of the Republic of Turkey by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk changed the ethnic and political make up of Turkey. In the case of Ephesus, which by the 20th century was yet again renamed (this time called Seljuk rather than Aya Soluk) a great deal has changed. However, what is most notable now about the area of Seljuk and Kuşadası is that it has regained something of an economic boost through tourism, an industry which brings visitors close to the more ancient history of Ephesus and the pilgrimage route to the House of the Virgin Mary in its vicinity. An ancient and elaborate cult of the goddess made way for a new religion, which proclaimed its Mary as Mother of God in the same city, a city that eventually would become the centre of revived Marian devotion over a millennium later.

Conclusion

Gathering what is of relevance in Ephesian history contributes to a grasp of context. Ancient Ephesus and its successors have passed through a variety of political and religious structures, which in turn have paralleled a variety of ritual circumstances. In its earlier periods, the practicing of ritual space in Ephesus was diverse and fluid in terms of the hosting of deities and their cults. With the coming of the monotheisms, these traditions slowly died out. However, variety in religious praxis did of course continue and in all periods from the earliest to the present, one sees examples of sharing religious space, ambiguous sanctuaries, ritual in flux, undergoing change and the visiting of holy places by those from outside the sanctuary's official religious affiliation. Whether one takes a sample from the development of Greco-Egyptian mysteries or the visit of a Turkish aristocrat to a shrine in Ephesus during the Byzantine period, a motif appears with relative consistency: that while religious traditions often claim purity, in practice (and practice is key) there is much greater ambiguity in their lineages and lived incarnations in daily life, than is commonly assumed.

Chapter 4

Modern Ephesus and Turkey as Ritual Field



A. Introduction to the Field

To begin entering into the specific field of Ephesus (an historical/traditional space, no longer a formal city) as a mixed sanctuary location in modern Turkey, it is indispensable to have some awareness about the location within which Meryem Ana's cult has grown. In particular, one is justified in asking what the

building itself consists of and what the context is for the cult there, coming, as it does, much later than many other similar shared sacred places. Here we will fast forward from some of the debates on the authenticity of the site, a bone of contention between those Roman Catholics who believe in the site and Eastern Orthodox, amongst others, who accept the Jerusalem tradition of the Virgin Mary's passing, having already covered much ground regarding the history of Ephesus. Coming closer to the modern era, we see that Ephesus took on more significance as it was being excavated and that a group of priests begin to look around the site in the 19th century (the same period as the archaeologists), hoping to find the site of the Virgin's death, based on the visions of Anne Catherine Emmerich, a stigmatist said to have seen much of the life of the Virgin Mary and Jesus in visions. Despite the fact that this is a key narrative of the site, it is mainly an internal Christian issue and thus far has not played a great role in what I have observed of Muslim ritualisation in the House. For that reason I leave that to the side and attempt to focus on the more ritually pertinent elements of sacred narratives attached to the place.

Ephesus

Meryem Ana is located on Nightingale Hill (*Bülbül Dag* in Turkish) near the modern town of Selçuk located in the area of the former city of Ephesus, which now lies in ruins. Nightingale Hill is itself a place of natural beauty that, as seen in my fieldwork, draws both what we think of as formal pilgrimage and what is labelled as 'tourism'. This is for the simple reason that the natural beauty draws some simply for picnics, sometimes articulated as part of a small pilgrimage, sometimes not. The hill lies between the ruins of Ephesus and the city of Selçuk, also being near the 'Cave of the Seven Sleepers' site, a place largely unvenerated now, but once associated with significant hagiography. The town of Selçuk begins at the ruins of the Temple of Artemis, followed by the Isa Bey Mosque and its predecessor, the church of John the Evangelist, further in towards the centre of the city. Like many places in Turkey, this town is marked by layers of civilisation and

religious forms that predictably lay one on top of the other in roughly chronological order.

Approaching the actual site of Meryem Ana Evi (literally, 'The House of Mother Mary' in Turkish) one goes up the 'hill' and passes a large statue of the Virgin Mary. Entering into the gates and approaching the House, there is a significant amount of religious paraphernalia for sale but not as much commerce as at the entrance to the ruins of the city of Ephesus. The physical lay-out of the shrine is very orderly, guiding the pilgrims' movement. Approaching the house one passes by a Roman cistern that does not appear to be ritually significant. Coming closer, a path guides the step of the pilgrim with signs in a variety of languages describing the story of the discovery of the house by Roman Catholic priests using the writings of the visionary Catherine of Emmerich and the statement that the Kirkindje Christians (a small community of culturally and linguistically Turkified Greek Orthodox Christians from the area) had previously maintained a tradition that this was the place of the Virgin Mary's Dormition, despite the mainstream position of the Orthodox Church in favour of the Jerusalem tradition.

Spatial Practice in Ephesus/Meryem Ana

Besides interviews, I have also conducted an observation of both the site and the spatial practice going on in the environment, whether by pilgrims that I personally observed or whose ritual acts were apparent to me by traces left behind. This was a direct and less verbal arena of work which produced some interesting results. Both through interview and observation, the focus in this project is to observe how the conceptual and perceptual elements of multi-religious space play themselves out in lived religion and its spatial practice, as emphasised in the work of Kim Knott. For that reason, here it is relevant to focus on the practical aspects of Meryem Ana Evi, becoming more familiar with the way that the physical lay-out guides the pilgrim. Lefebvre also holds to the view that spaces both are shaped by those who design them and shape those who interact with them, in a constant dialogue and triologue between space, actors in the space and designers of space.

From entering to exiting the shrine one makes a circle, beginning at the shopping area where there is a restaurant and a shop with religious items for sale. Most items are Christian, some general tourist information and there are translations/interpretations of the Koran in several languages. Proceeding on, there is a large Roman cistern and a ramp leading up to the House of the Virgin Mary. As one walks up the ramp, there is a series of large signs in a number of languages telling the story of the place. As one approaches the house, there is a statue of the Virgin Mary to the left that attracts some veneration from visitors. To the immediate left of the House is the space set aside for groups of pilgrims to attend mass, an activity often held outside of Meryem Ana itself in an open air space, to accommodate a large number of pilgrims.

On entering the house, one is closely attended by Turkish police while clergy and members of religious orders are left to spiritual duties. Pilgrims comply with the spatial practice indicated by the construction of the house and, following its 'L' shape, they move forward until the altar and then make a left turn out. By the door is a very large and ancient tree, to which I saw one pilgrim paying particular attention, touching it and removing bits of it, along with flowers. Beginning to descend the stairs and return back to the beginning of the pilgrimage, there are three major spaces designated for ritual activity: first an area for lighting candles, followed by a series of fountains and ending with a space for tying cords as symbols of petitions.

Observing and Contextualising Ritual Practice in The Virgin Mary's House

All of these elements (candles, water and tying cords) are found in Turkish folk-religion, but tying cords is a form of religious praxis that is particularly common amongst Turkish groups whether in Anatolia or Central Asia. Generally, strings are tied to trees. Candles are also sometimes lit around trees which are connected to sacred spaces, as can be seen in the Şahkulu Sultan Alevi Centre in, Istanbul and, of course, in a number of sacred places throughout the Turkic world. Discussing the variety of methods whereby a saint in Ottoman Turkey might be petitioned, Hasluck raised the

example of 'binding' as found amongst both Christians and Muslims, but particularly among the Turks and the role of trees in binding:

'As to "binding", the common forms of the ritual acts here included under the name of 'binding' are the tying of knots and the driving of nails (the ancient *defixio*): both acts typify the practice and are thought actually to bring about the transference of the suppliant's ills from himself to the object knotted or nailed. Binding with this object is one of the commonest superstitious acts all over the world, and is prominent among the secular magic uses of Christians as well as Moslems throughout the Near East. Knotted rags, threads, and shreds of clothing are the commonest of all outward signs of a popular cult in Turkey. The knot is tied to the most convenient object on or in the immediate vicinity of the grave... It is popularly believed that, 'in proportion as these rags rot and disappear, so will maladies, decrease in this world, or sins be effaced in the next. If a rag be untied, the evils bound by the knot fall upon the user...' ³⁴²

The tying of cords, strings and notes is perhaps one of the most syncretic practices taking place in Meryem Ana but on a very micro level and certainly not in such a way as to challenge the orthodoxy of either Islamic or Roman Catholic tradition. When asked about the significance of tying strings on special trees in Turkish culture, Metin (one of my field respondents) was very clear that this was a very old and particularly Turkish and Central Asian practice. He said that this could be traced back to the period in which Turks had lived in tents and had held trees to be so important and powerful that the trunk of an important tree would be brought along with a given family along their nomadic routes, to symbolise the family structure.

The tying of strings to trees has at some point been centralised and organised into string tying on a designated wall. An interview respondent (Metin, to be introduced shortly) commented

³⁴² HASLUCK: *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, 262.

that often pilgrims will take a cloth of some kind and draw on it the symbol of what their petition concerns. So, if it is a limb of the body, a house or a child, the image will reflect that, as is the case with ex-voto items found in churches all over the world. This is then combined with the established tradition of tying sacred cords and cloths in a kind of merging of forms. Interestingly, though, both micro-ritual practices exist in their more 'original' form on the site. So, for example, there were elaborately braided red strings attached to the petition wall and notes inserted directly into the tree next to the wall. In a more traditionally Roman Catholic form, there were more typical metal ex-voto objects displayed in a container in the 'L' room, the second room of the House of the Virgin, once containing Koranic script. Thus, both the earlier and more fused forms continue to be observable in the environs of the pilgrimage site.

As previously noted, Muslim pilgrimage is the more relevant element of the house as a practiced space, for the purposes of this study, and it is its more grassroots level of practice (tying strings to trees, using water for healing, heterodox beliefs) in particular that is of interest here. Heather comments that three pilgrimages to the House has been seen by some local Muslims to equal a pilgrimage to Mecca (i.e. somewhat self-styled or traditional beliefs outside the mainstream)³⁴³ and a particular patronage over family matters and mothers is a recurring theme in the explanations of my own respondents. Verbal explanations, however, have their limitation and, therefore, a more grounded observation of gesture and physicality is also here employed. To observe Muslim pilgrimage is more than a little complex in the modern space of Meryem Ana. The factors are numerous but among the more significant is the large number of visitors who cannot be definitely distinguished as either tourists or pilgrims. This very large percentage (particularly during tourism's high season in the summer) may be seen going into the House, for example, and talking, making no particular observable sign of devotion and then tying a cloth or string while

³⁴³ A. HEATHER: 'The Shrine of Our Lady of Ephesus: A Study of the Personas of Mary as Lived Religion', *Religious Studies Theses* 19 (2008) 38.

exiting alongside other pilgrims who have spent time in prayer at the site.

Further, it is difficult for an outsider to escape the tendency to judge based on appearances being, as one is, outside the world of insider cultural cues. So, for example, I have tended to assume that a veiled Turkish woman at the site was a practicing Muslim and likely to be a pilgrim, while an unveiled Turkish woman in Western dress was more likely to be non-religious and coming to the site as a tourist or in that vague space between tourism and pilgrimage which seems difficult to classify. Of course, in some cases this would prove to be true and dress can indeed be both a signal of self-representation and intention in approaching a sacred site. In other cases, this did not prove to be precisely the case. It was absolutely necessary, therefore, to query my own assumptions and I have continued to do that throughout, preferring to allow others their own space of self-definition. I have met, for example, members of the conservative but modern Gulen movement of Turkey, who both go without a head covering and those who wear the colourful *hijab* of other religious modern women in Turkey, both women coming from within the context of the same religious community. Further, a respondent by the name of Zeynep (to be shortly introduced) while describing herself as a non-religious person, refused to go inside Meryem Ana with me, initially, because she was wearing the typical beach-ware of the Aegean coast: shorts and a sleeveless top. So, a self-described agnostic may comply with codes of modesty. It was also a comment of many Turks with whom I have come in contact that a particular family may have a tradition of wearing the head scarf, yet this does not speak for the piety of an individual woman, in said family, for example. This may seem self-evident but remains a significant fact, none the less. For that reason, there must be a certain caution that, while particular forms of dress can show a certain orientation or membership in secular or religious subculture, one not fall into ethnographic presumptuousness.

In some cases, of course, there was the blessing of some predictability and consistency in dress as a signal. For example, on my first visit, a group of religious women wearing head scarves came together with one or two males to the site. Passing through the house, they came down to the fountain and one of the women

opened a copy of the Koran which she had brought wrapped in a cloth. There she sat reading Koran for some time, expressing her own Islamic sense of devotion at the site. On leaving the site, she and her cohorts also stopped at the large statue of the Virgin Mary that greets pilgrims as they go up the mountain. Again, while we do not here find syncretism, as such, there is a clear capacity to appreciate the ritual forms of both communities at the site. So, while the young woman's personal devotional practice was Koranic in nature, she and her fellow Muslim pilgrims were capable of respectfully recognising the iconography of the sacred place. Both word and image, in this case, had value for these Muslim pilgrims, rather than the simple creation a separate space that minimised interaction with the non-Muslim elements of the space. The fluidity of ritual form is seen in Ephesus from its earliest days to the present, however much in a variety of formulations.

Importantly, I should add that there was a consistently repeating theme that women who were religiously observant and wearing head scarves would often act ritually in Meryem Ana Evi drawing on a repertoire that was more traditionally Islamic (reciting Surah Fatiha in the House, reading Koran) unlike others who would engage less elaborately (in terms of prayer and ritual) and more with what we have termed the basic sacral, following Post's use of the term. In the latter case one sees a contrasting tendency to simply tie a string or take a bit of water, with minimal ritual of a specifically Islamic nature. In an interview with Sezen who I introduce in a following chapter on *adab*, it was explained to me that such an approach is not unusual amongst some conservative communities, in which shared pilgrimage means acting ritually in a non-Muslim with ease, but via an Islamic praxis without suggestion of hybrid or syncretic acts.

In order to approach a site such as Meryem Ana Evi on the outskirts of historical Ephesus one needs to cast a wide net over not only the site itself but also nearby cities on the pilgrimage trail around the area. While in the nearby town of Kuşadası, I took the opportunity to work with interviewees who had multiple levels of connection with Meryem Ana Evi. Two in particular were helpful: Zeynep and Metin, who both make up a particular demographic's connection to the site. Zeynep and Metin are individuals who have

both participated in pilgrimage to Meryem Ana as a part of family tradition and are both of 'Rumeli' Turkish extraction (ethnically Turkish but with a long line of residence in Greece). Further, they both considered themselves to be non-religious but exhibited a certain respect for religious and spiritual traditions. Neshe represents a traditionally religious view and is a third distinct voice. While he plays a lesser role here, Emre, who had less connection with the site, is briefly mentioned for a further contrasting voice, one more detached yet informative for this very positioning. All of those who I interviewed knew of my nationality and some knew of my religious affiliations as well. Most were interviewed chiefly in the English language.

B. Main Respondents

Zeynep

Zeynep grew up in the Izmir area, the greater metropolitan region of which Kuşadası, Selçuk and the former city of Ephesus make up a part. Not unlike a large number of people in Izmir, her parents were both from Greece. Her father speaks fluent Greek because of his transference to Turkey (later than the population exchange of 1923) did not take place until he was 13 years old and he had spent some years in the Greek public education system. By contrast, Zeynep's mother had left for Turkey at three years of age and did not speak Greek. In religious terms, Zeynep described herself as an 'atheist at the moment'.³⁴⁴

The House of the Virgin Mary was not of a very great significance in her family's life but it did figure in her childhood. The natural beauty of the government protected national park surrounding Meryem Ana was a draw, in and of itself, for picnics and family outings. Secondly, she adds, a visit to the shrine

³⁴⁴ While I did not probe further for definitions (self-definition being a consistently intense and unavoidable topic in modern Turkey) it was my experience in Turkey, as in Europe, that the term 'atheist' is sometimes employed flexibly to mean 'non-religious' or 'agnostic' rather than reflecting a consistent rejection of any belief in a deity, as the term literally indicates.

might be of interest, once her family had arrived at the site. This is an interesting modern reversal to the very long tradition in many places, but particularly including the Ottoman Empire, of placing pilgrimage as primary, while enjoying other activities around the journey but, ostensibly, considering them to be secondary to the religious value of the pilgrimage itself. Faroqhi, a noted scholar of Ottoman history at the Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich, describes picnics as very common during pilgrimage and other rites, around the Bosphorus.³⁴⁵

Further, Zeynep indicated that she was encouraged by her mother that, if she wanted, she could go to the House of the Virgin Mary in appreciation of its sanctity and to petition for divine favours, but she should do so without forgetting that this was not a Muslim place of worship, strictly speaking. As such, it would be best that she make use of any Islamic prayer form outside of the house itself, which was the property of the church.

When asked why and towards what end Muslims would go on pilgrimage to Meryem Ana Evi, Zeynep tended to invoke the two most common responses: the basic common sacrality of the space for both Christians and Muslims and the desire to bring petitions for help to the site. In terms of basic sacrality, she briefly touched on the fact that Jesus and the Virgin Mary are sacred both to Christians and Muslims. Thus the house is sacred to both communities. Zeynep also noted that, for many Turkish Muslims, the Virgin Mary seemed to be a more popular figure than Jesus himself.

Further explaining the more Muslim-specific praxis and the importance of petition, Zeynep indicated that there is a close connection between Muslim mothers and family life and the sort of petitions made at Meryem Ana. That is, most commonly, Muslim mothers will be found making petitions on behalf of their children at, for example, the approach of exam periods. Above all, the shrine is often seen as a place for women and mothers, in particular, according to Zeynep. In this way, it seems to have evolved a Muslim tradition running parallel to the Christian spatial praxis, conception and perception, as can be

³⁴⁵ S. FAROQHI: *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire* (London 2000) 182.

similarly seen in other places in the Islamic world such as Seidnaya, outside of Damascus where, again, the visits to the Virgin's shrine have developed a Muslim following that appears to have a greater emphasis on the patronage of the Virgin over mothers and childbirth.

Metin

When looking at the theme of relationship in the field, there will be a further exploration of the highly relational narratives brought forward by Metin. Metin is a Turkish man in his thirties who expressed views which were in line with a mainstream Turkish secularism, but with an openness to various forms of Islamic spirituality such as Sufism, the teachings of Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi and Alevism without any particularly great enthusiasm for mosque-going mainstream Islamic practice, as might be expected. Metin had a number of successful businesses and is something of an entrepreneur. He also expressed an interest in Greece due to his own origins amongst the Turkish Cretans. Metin grew up with the story of the dramatic rescue of two Greek children during a period of great conflict between Greece and Turkey during his parents and grandparents lives, story that continued to reverberate for many years when one of the children went onto become a general in the Greek army.

This narrative was very much germane (for Metin) to the discussion of relating to non-Muslims in the space of Meryem Ana, a place he had visited and to which his mother would go to pray, as well as Islamic places of prayer, including the shrines of Sufi saints. Metin, like most respondents who had a background in shared pilgrimage, was very quick to go to the social and historical element of this practice, connecting it to his own family's larger context. Metin, for example, pointed out that his family was very Kemalist (Turkish secularist) also, and had a long history of relating across religious and ethnic boundaries within the local communities where they had lived over the last century, in Istanbul and the greater Izmir area. Like other informants, Metin knew of the multi-religious nature of Meryem Ana Evi but was less familiar with the larger world of shared pilgrimage in Turkey and was

particularly intrigued to hear of the Armenian Orthodox church in Istanbul (Church of the Archangels, Balat) where Muslims prayed, sometimes making full ritual prostration, next to Armenian Christians.

Before engaging with Metin, I had spoken to a tour guide by the name of Emre. He is from an ethnically Georgian Muslim background (not involved in any way with the 20th century population exchange) with family members in the Naqshibandi order.³⁴⁶ He himself is not a practicing Muslim nor does he consider himself a believer. When I asked him about whether he had noticed a change in the room, he said that yes, there had been a Koranic quote in Kufic (Arabic) script on the wall of the 'L room' but it seems to have been taken down at some stage. My question seemed to have revived a memory that had otherwise been lost and not previously particularly noteworthy, to him. He quickly followed by citing a communal theological reason why this was acceptable. According to Emre, while a Muslim can respect and believe in the Prophethood of Jesus or Moses and the sanctity of Mary, if a Christian or Jew comes to believe in Muhammed or accept the Koran, he or she cannot really remain a Christian. He made this commentary without articulating the leap of application to the spatial practice of the shrine but did, of course, imply that this was an important reason that the religious order at Meryem Ane would be keen to keep the spatial practice from being Islamised in any way and would, correspondingly, be justified in Christianising the space.

By contrast, Metin and the guest I met at his house, were not aware of this process of change occurring (and of course, admittedly, the detail may sound more significant than it appears to those more familiar with the space). They were people who had spent much of their lives in Istanbul, while now living close to the Ephesus site. However, Metin's reaction was much the same. For him, Meryem Ana belongs, essentially, to the church and its custodians should not feel any pressure to be overly-accommodating or to allow the space to be in any real way transferred to Muslim use. However, when asked, Metin seemed

³⁴⁶ The Naqshibandi *tariqat* is a Sufi tradition often seen as somewhat austere and orthodox.

positive about the idea of Muslims praying *salah* in the area of the House, although he said he had only seen it on one occasion. He saw it perhaps as a sign of unity, as indeed it has come to be viewed at other places of Muslim-Christian convergence such as the Armenian 'Holy Miracle Church' in the Balat neighbourhood of Istanbul, which we also discussed. When I mentioned that such places not only had Muslim, Christian and 'Pagan' layers but that they were developing a modern secular layer, either as museums or tourist attractions, Metin was very quick to add that for him, this was indeed a very good development and, throughout our interview, he spoke highly of secularism and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Like Emre (who I have not dedicated a great deal of space to because of his more distant personal relationship to the shrine) Metin often articulated a stance in line with normative and Kemalist (secular) views on religion, the state and Turkish identity. Emre, by contrast, expressed some leftist views alongside Kemalist ones, but both were in clear agreement that the space of Meryem Ana was the property of Non-Muslims and, as such, it was a place for respectful visitation by Muslims but not a location to lay claim to space. Metin respectfully recalled the words of a Turkish Muslim group whose guide encouraged his group to be as respectful in the church as if they were in a mosque, remembering that 'she is your mother also'. Further, the importance of secular space and the restraining of Islamist influence in society, generally, was emphasised by him. Religion should be down-played so that Turkey would not become like 'Arab and other Muslim countries taken over by fundamentalism'. He further spoke about his own background in the study of Biblical archaeology and his belief that many of the ancient stories of monotheism are essentially shared myths found also in the Epic of Gilgamesh, for example. That is, of course, not to say that he did not also affirm his personal belief in God and his respect for what he understands to be more tolerant forms of Islam such as Sufism and Alevism.³⁴⁷ Metin specifically

³⁴⁷ Alevi forms of Islam are of great interest to those who specialize in Anatolian religiosity. Here there is not sufficient space to make a detour into Alevi belief and practice. It will perhaps be enough to say that, like some forms of Sufism, Alevism is seen to be a very tolerant, if highly unorthodox form of Islam (from a Sunni and mainstream Shia point of view) which has gained increasing visibility and freedom of worship

connected his open and tolerant attitude, also, to the highly pluralist atmosphere of Izmir and the Aegean West coast of Turkey.

As with Zeynep, it was important to learn what traditions existed within Metin's family around the role of pilgrimage to Meryem Ana. In Metin's family, the person most likely to engage in pilgrimage was his mother, who followed a similarly Kemalist approach to Islam, not wearing a head scarf or being outwardly overly modest in dress (he gestured to indicate that she sometimes wore short dresses), but consistently praying and observing Islamic worship in private. He further described her as being someone who would periodically visit holy places, both Christian and Muslim. In Istanbul and other locations, she would visit the shrines of holy men and women, known in Turkish as *türbeler* (*türbe* singular). Additionally, of course, in the area of historical Ephesus, she would visit Meryem Ana Evi. Despite this, Metin did not make as direct of a connection between women and the pilgrimage as did Zeynep. Instead, he emphasised that married couples would go there to have their new families blessed and students would go to pray for help with exams. He suggested that I return to Meryem Ana closer to an exam period when I would find more of such activity.

Neshe

By way of contrast, another respondent seemed very reserved about the notion of Muslims making pilgrimage to Meryem Ana. Neshe is an observant religious woman whose family comes, historically, from the Asian side of Istanbul. She belongs to a small women-only group of Mevlevi dervishes in training. One might expect that, coming from the cosmopolitan environment of Istanbul and practicing Sufism, Neshe would be open to the idea of

(thought not without continued difficulty) since the dawning of the republic. The latter part of this statement does not apply to the Sufi orders who have had less visibility since the republic, however. See the series of papers published by the Swedish Research Institute Istanbul in two volumes: T. OLSON, E. OZDALGA, C. RAUDVERE (eds.): *Alevi Identity: Cultural, Religious and Social Perspectives* (Istanbul 1998).

shared pilgrimage. Indeed, when discussing my visit to Antakya, she showed great interest in the place as a very multi-religious city which maintains much of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious diversity of pre-republican Turkey. Interestingly, however, as we crossed the threshold into the space of concrete ritual, her tone changed.

When I asked Neshe whether she had been to Meryem Ana she said yes. In the process of my research I was consistently surprised by the number of Turks who had been and the fact that all the Turks I spoke to were very familiar with it. Meryem Ana is clearly a symbolic part of the national consciousness as one of the important places in Turkey, at least among the relatively educated demographic group with which I was able to communicate in the Izmir and Istanbul metropolitan areas, mostly in the English language.

However, when asked about what rituals she might engage in to mark her pilgrimage there, she replied 'none...I didn't light candles'. When I further asked if there were any other rituals she would feel comfortable with such as tying strings, she again replied in the negative and seemed somewhat uneasy. In order to gauge her relationship to folk-religious practice generally, I also asked whether she held a belief in the evil eye and the value of using an object such as a *nazar* to protect from it. She was clear that this was simply superstition and that in Turkish tradition, 'religion and culture' were easily confused. Clearly, Neshe places a high value on what she understands to be authentic belief and religiosity.

The natural next question was why she would not partake in the typical rituals. Her answer was not so much theological or based on Islamic jurisprudence as it was on personal intuition and on her perception of common attitudes toward religiosity among modern Turks. First and foremost, she said, the people who visited these churches (she mainly referenced the Prince's Islands in Istanbul, where St. George's church attracts large numbers of Muslims every year³⁴⁸) were visiting these places, 'but they don't go to the mosque'. When I furthered probed what she might mean by that, she did not assert that they were in

³⁴⁸ COUROUCLI: 'Sharing Nostalgia in Istanbul'.

a Christianising process so much as a secularising process, whereby religion of any kind did not hold much substantive meaning, not even that of the 'pilgrim's' own tradition. Neshe used words such as 'superstitious' and 'trendy' to describe the practice and, in turn, questioned rhetorically why Muslims would need to do such a thing. When I suggested that they might be in search of favours from God or that it made sense for a Muslim to also visit the location of Mary's house in Koranic terms, she did shift to a more personal sense of the issue, saying that she did not feel very comfortable in churches. When I asked why, she indicated that she simply felt more at peace in mosques and that churches gave her a sensation which she indicated with a kind of asphyxiation gesture.

C. Analysis

At least two very consistent themes are particularly relevant here in terms of spatial practice and its context: First, that there is no social, ethnic or religious vacuum in which to examine Meryem Ana and similar sites. That is, not only do people of, at least, two religious backgrounds converge upon the space, but their collective stories converge there, which include a variety of geographies and experiences. The site is, in a sense, inter-textual. Secondly, out of this multi-religious and multi-ethnic context, proceeds a very particular etiquette, which I will here refer to by the classical Islamic and Arabic term 'adab', introducing the notion briefly before returning to it in a later section.

In order to understand the notion of right practice within the shared *temenos*, *adab* is perhaps one of the most key concepts as an example of the more emic discourse which influences sacred praxis in Turkey and much of the Islamic and Eastern Mediterranean world, which will be partly introduced here. *Adab* is a subtle or explicit code of behaviour (more deeply understood as an approach to codes of behaviour) described variously and taking on many forms and meanings. Barbara Metcalf, in her work on *adab* in South Asia, describes it as, 'proper discrimination of correct order, behaviour and

taste',³⁴⁹ a definition I accept as foundational for this concept. Further, there is the statement commonly attributed to the Prophet Muhammed, 'I was sent to this world to teach *adab*.'³⁵⁰ On this basis, a number of schools of *adab* have appeared in Islamic culture. Perhaps the most well known and still cultivated is that of the Sufi lodges, or '*tasawufi adab*'³⁵¹

In another context, one finds the '*adab* literature' produced by many Islamic societies. These are Arabic (and other) works of literature on the role and behaviour of a judge (*adab a-qadi*), muftis, for example (*adab al-mufti*) or, the *adab* for other social roles. In the Ottoman and South Asian contexts, for example, there emerged a genre of *adab* literature to teach women correct behaviour,³⁵² which is, of course, now of great interest to gender theorists. From the development of *adab* as a literary genre, the term has evolved, in modern Arabic, to refer to all *belles lettres* and literary works. Finally and most narrowly, it tends to be used to refer to literature as a discipline in the academy, evincing an interesting linguistic transformation process.³⁵³

A more subtle approach to *adab* (one which appears in this project and particularly the fieldwork interviews) is found in the work of Remco Ensel of Nijmegen Radboud University, in his book on Moroccan village life, *Saints and Servants in Southern Morocco*. In the sixth chapter, he notes that the villagers he worked with made a distinction (as in classical Islamic texts) between *aql* (reasoning, rationale) and *nafs* (instincts, passions). However, through an illustration, Ensel demonstrates that these cannot be reduced to a simple binary opposition. *Aql* is not to be used alone and not in simple opposition to the *nafs*, but in concert, so as to better manage the *qaida* or accepted code of behavioural norms. In one key example, Ensel observed two young men at the Eid

³⁴⁹ B. METCALF: *Moral Conduct and Authority: The place of Adab in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley 1984) 2.

³⁵⁰ R. FRAGER: *Heart, Self and Soul* (Wheaton 1999) 152.

³⁵¹ For an example from *Ishraqi/Suhrawardi* order: Q. UL-HUDA: *Striving for Divine Union: Spiritual Exercises for Suhrawardi Sufis* (London 2003) 62-72.

³⁵² B. METCALF: *Perfecting Women: Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi's Bihishti Zewar* (Berkley 1990).

³⁵³ J. CAMPO (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Islam*, s.v. 'adab', (New York 2009) 11.

festivities in the village. One came to the banquet wearing old, wrinkled clothes, whereas the other came in his best attire. The two were compared and the one who came badly dressed won the approval of community members. Both men were brothers who had recently lost their father. Under the circumstances, with the arrival of the Great Feast, the best behavioural choice would not have been easily made, on a day normally requiring formal dress. Pure *aql*, in this case, did not suffice, nor a normal following of the established code of conduct (*qaida*). Referring to the formally dressed brother, Ensel says:

Surprisingly, it was the latter who was said to lack reason. This was because he showed happiness at the first Islamic feast after the death of his father. It was his brother who knew the appropriate way to express his emotions. The example shows that for a proper social functioning, men cannot act without either *aql* or *nafs*. Although the rational part is valued more positively, both are necessary. Just as the coexistence of men and women may lead to collisions, villagers state that incidents caused by the contrast of reason and passion belong to the inevitable facts of life. Life consists of acting out this double bind. The ideal aim in life is to maintain a just equilibrium of reason and passion in one's life.³⁵⁴

This goes very much to the heart of our question regarding the hows of Muslim/Non-Muslim ritual and spatial negotiation in shared sacred space. The question of *adab* appears not only in Ephesus but in all structures of sacred precincts (the *temenos* to borrow an ancient term) that host more than one self-identified community having its own distinct religious praxis. Besides the Muslim-Christian convergence in Ephesus, every example cited in the wider world of shared pilgrimage becomes in some moment a space of *adab* as the negotiation of reason (*aql*), emotion/passion (*nafs*) and socially established norms (*qaida*). The spaces have been designed/conceived on the basis of the perceptual space of one, both or all communities converging on it. They have, over

³⁵⁴ R. ENSEL: *Saints and Servants in Southern Morocco* (Leiden 1999) 181.

time, been practiced spaces in which a practical negotiation of this *adab*-discernment (as described by Ensel) has been worked out and continues to be negotiated.

In my own general exploration of ritual environments in Turkey I can confirm that this same understanding of *adab* is present within the culture there. As an example, one maintains a higher level of traditional *adab* within the Sufi *tekkes*, generally, than in the greater context of Turkish life and perhaps even more than in a mosque. While I was sitting with a respected Sufi teacher in the Fatih neighbourhood of Istanbul, I moved my legs around several times while speaking with him, trying to maintain some comfort and not allowing my legs to fall asleep, but without extending my legs. Sitting in the circle, it was not possible to fully extend my legs without showing the bottom of my feet to the dervishes and visitors across from me. This would normally be a clear breach of *adab*, as showing the soles of one's feet to another is seen to be very offensive. In one moment, the Sheikh, noticing my physical discomfort, told me to extend my feet, I asked him if this was really permissible and he said 'Adab is true but in this case you must extend your feet.' When I asked why, he responded that in my (Western) culture we rarely sat that way and that I was therefore exempt. *Adab* then is not so much a fixed code of behaviour as a fluidly applicable concept of appropriate action whether in the market place or place of worship. As we will see, this is constantly at play in the spatial fields of shared pilgrimage places.

Adab and Case Studies

Having understood this, then, how might the case studies here invoked be illuminated by the notion of *adab*? The most advantageous approach to take is to apply Ensel's case study back to the responses given by the interviewees. In all cases, some form of *adab* was at issue, but *adab* in its more subtle form, as described by Ensel. That is to say that *adab* is not only a series of do's and don'ts but a form of discernment balancing tradition, human instinct and rationalisation.

An important example of this comes with the discussion of how Islamised the space of Meryem Ana should be. On this subject

there were a range of responses. Neshe spoke very much from within the Muslim community and expressed concern for the piety of Muslims and her own internal experience, without a focus on *adab* towards the other. She also consistently remained apolitical. Emre and Metin took up the issue of shared space very directly, with both expressing a widely communal view. In Emre's case, the *adab* of spatial practice was related to the theological circumstances of Muslims and Christians, as well. For Metin, the issue was more with communal ownership and the high value placed on respect, which he illustrated with the story of the Turkish guide's instructions to his group of Muslim pilgrims on how to relate to the space in question. Finally, in Zeynep we find an explicit expression of located religion and a spatial practice informed by *adab* passed on from her mother.

As explained, Zeynep was advised to make a supplication or prayer at the shrine, but to do so with respect towards the Christian identification of the space. As we have seen, a number of arrangements are made, in a number of different styles and formulations, in multi-religious spaces, ranging from mixture to separation or, in the case of the locations I have visited in Turkey, a hospitality model, where Muslims visit but do not carve out their own space via physical construction. In a certain sense, the Turkish environment provides hospitality to this Christian presence. In turn, the Church is hospitable to Muslims. However, the exact constellation of spaces, ritual acts, and boundaries varies according to the negotiation of *adab* taking place at any given time. It is, therefore, fluid.

In contrast to Zeynep's instructions, we have the examples of churches that allow, within their walls, Islamic religious practice under the particular circumstances of pilgrimage, such as the Armenian 'Miracle Church' in Istanbul or the Convent of Seidnaya outside Damascus. This reinforces the flexible and fluid nature of *adab*: It is, in any given situation, a subtle act of discernment rather than simply a fixed set of rules. As such, there is no one rule governing the relationships of Muslim to Non-Muslim sacred places, besides a general ethic of respect for a variety of sacred places, as seen in Koranic discourse (e.g. Surah al Hajj 22:40).³⁵⁵

³⁵⁵ L. BAKHTIAR: *The Sublime Quran*, 293.

Instead, there is a sea of differing opinions, from clerics issuing *fatwas* against Muslims visiting churches other than for tourism³⁵⁶ to local folklore amongst Turkish Muslims that three trips to Ephesus equal one hajj to Mecca, for those who cannot afford it.³⁵⁷ So, even amongst those who are comfortably ecumenical, the negotiation and significance of space inspires a wide diversity of traditions, opinions and ritual formulations.

In the case of Zeynep's somatic articulation of *adab*, she seems to have been taught an awareness of her position in the dominant culture and the potential for an appropriation of minority space, as similarly articulated by Emre and Metin. Of course, all three come from families with some historical experience of being minorities themselves (in Greece and Georgia) Emre pointed out, as we spoke in the Isa Bey mosque (see history chapter), that, historically, the Turks had taken the main church of each city they conquered. Yet, there is also the long history of Ottoman tolerance of which many Turks that I interviewed remained keenly aware of. There is of course also the reality of some counter appropriation during the Crusades and very similar stories appear in both Muslim and Christian lore about the supernatural threats to those who infringe on the spaces of other religious communities.³⁵⁸

If one compares the legacy of Ottoman multiculturalism with the regional experience of nationalist violence and the population exchanges of the 20th century (as experienced in the living memories of the families of Zeynep and Metin), it becomes clear why some of my respondents placed such a high value on the maintenance of a non-combative, respectful and relaxed atmosphere in the common space of Meryem Ana.

³⁵⁶ See, as an example, the judgement given on a popular Muslim website: <http://www.islamweb.net/emainpage/index.php?page=showfatwa&Option=FatwaId&Id=82793>, accessed February 26, 2011.

³⁵⁷ This motif of three visits is not an unusual theme. It was also related to me by Istanbul Turks that the highly significant pilgrimage to the shrine of Eyup Sultan is sometimes said to be equivalent to hajj after three visits, for those who cannot afford the journey to Saudi Arabia. The three-visits motif appeared in my fieldwork and was also mentioned in a Religious Studies MA thesis: ABRAHAM: 'The Shrine of Our Lady of Ephesus', 47.

³⁵⁸ MERI: *The Lonely Wayfarer's Guide to Pilgrimage*.

In Zeynep's case, the *adab*-discernment particularly revolves around gesture and spatial boundaries. Islamic prayer form is almost always accompanied by gesture and movement; There is prostration in *salah* (five daily prayers plus optional *sunnah*) and upraised hands in *dua* (petition) amongst other forms. The raising of hands in supplication was indicated by Zeynep when discussing the hypothetical prayer said outside of the building of Meryem Ana Evi. In the case of Emre, who has frequently visited the church as a tour guide but not as a pilgrim, it was the conceptual space which was highlighted and the theological implications of the building's design and decoration. Metin, who recalled a personal and family connection with Meryem Ana was perhaps the most taken aback by the notion of Muslims having a right to take issue with the Christianising of what he saw as a basically Christian space and he generally expressed concern at any sort of rigidly Sunni Muslim position being taken in Turkey in any ambit. His Kemalist approach does indeed even have its own modern *adab* often revolving around spatial practice, such as not allowing traditional Muslim head coverings in government buildings.³⁵⁹ These three, then, from three different angles: embodied practice, theological integrity as out pictured in architecture and ideology and social praxis as a reflection of ideology, all point towards judgement and discernment of the correct *adab* based on a number of factors, but all seek a balance between the demands of rationality (*aql*), the physical and passionate needs of the self (*nafs*) and commonly acceptable behaviour (*qaida*) to arrive at what seems to be the best way of moving, gesturing and physically constructing the shared sacred space. In order to beginning further contextualising the approaches that appeared here, we must continue to look at the

³⁵⁹ I use the term *adab* here in terms of a secular context, not to suggest that it is a form of traditional *adab*, nor to suggest that somehow Turks are bound to reproduce traditional practices anymore than any other cultural group. Instead I use the term to indicate the similarities in more traditional cultural forms such as *adab* and the sense of ritual-like negotiations that can occur even outside said environments. Debates over whether a US head of state or his wife (as in the case of George Bush Senior's visit to Great Britain) should show any sign of reverence towards the British Sovereign during an official meeting is also a typical case of '*adab* negotiation' in the sense I am employing the term here.

practicing of space and include examples from outside Ephesus towards a broadening contextualisation.

D. Parallel Cases

Istanbul

From Ephesus, I approached a small number of shared pilgrimage sites in Istanbul, in order to have some points of comparison with the practices in Meryem Ana. Towards that end I was able to spend some time observing ritual practice in churches, mosques and tekkes (dervish lodges) in Istanbul. The time in mosques and Sufi establishments was to gain a greater perspective on the management of sacred space and *adab* in traditional Turkish culture, an ambient influence in mainstream secular Turkish culture and influence, of course, on the Islamic and more hybrid practices carried out by Turkish Muslims in shared pilgrimage locations. Naturally, the churches that I visited were ones which had a consistent Turkish Muslim following, for the purpose of contrast and parallel, with a particular eye toward gesture and the embodiedness of the non-corporate ritual carried out on the site.

Of particular interest was the Sent Antuan Church near one of the main hubs of activity in Istanbul on Istiklal Caddesi. The current incarnation of the Sent Antuan church dates only from 1912, but has a lineage connecting it, through several constructions, to the Italian (and Franciscan) community of Istanbul leading back as far as the 13th century.³⁶⁰ Sent Antuan is a major centre of mixed pilgrimage and, perhaps even more than Meryem Ana, features a great deal of syncretic gesture and ritual.

The Turkish newspaper *Hurriyet* (on 28 September, 2003) published an article on the significance of Istanbul churches for Turkish folk-religion, listing a number of sanctuaries in Istanbul, along with their typical spatial practices and purported properties as places of healing and petition connected to particular ailments and other personal and familial problems. Sent Antuan is traditionally (by Turkish Muslims) recommended for those seeking

³⁶⁰ www.sentantuan.com, retrieved 11 November, 2010.

work, wanting to be homeowners, to be married, to have children, or seeking physical healing.³⁶¹ The pilgrims and visitors entered from a wide variety of religious and non-religious contexts as evinced by the typical human communication in signs that is clothing and jewellery. Present in the sanctuary were women in hijab and women with sleeveless strap-tops, some making gestures of devotion and some merely commenting and pointing. Men came often accompanied by their wives who were the more actively obvious in their ritual acts. Some wore symbols of Alevi identity.

Out of this demographic diversity, a number of varieties of practice became noticeable, on a scale from syncretism to more secular visitation and a large variety of shades in between. Upon entering the church, it was my impression that there were Turkish Muslims fully imitating Christian praxis, including crossing themselves and other ritual acts which, I would not have anticipated. Because this was only an intuition, it was not until I learned that the church had in fact instituted a policy of asking those coming for communion whether or not they were Catholics, that I realised indeed there did seem to be a fairly deep hybridity taking place in the space. If the church was concerned about Muslims receiving communion then, perhaps, some were attempting to receive, as the *Hurriyet* article describes the church as a place where one should 'receive consecrated bread' which the church staff have channelled into an offering of blessed (rather than sacramental) bread, similar to that offered in Orthodox churches. Overall, the sense of space was also more chaotic than what one finds in Ephesus, where Meryem Ana Evi is carefully managed both by its own physical construction, the church and a significant police presence representing the state.

By contrast, Sent Antuan, as explained, hosts a variety of spatial practice. The next level of practice seems to be a more carefully managed encounter with the space, drawing closely on both the perceptual space of the Muslim pilgrim and the conceptually constructed. Amongst those who appeared to be negotiating the space were Muslim pilgrims who followed the

³⁶¹ Z. KAZAK: 'With Which Wishes Do They Visit Which Churches?' *Hurriyet Archives*: <http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=173875> (accessed 21 April, 2011).

physical outlay of the church and engaged with most of its elements, but tempered with a Muslim or Non-Christian ritual negotiation.³⁶² This layer of praxis is perhaps the most interesting for its liminality. It takes place in a very unique space that is rarely found elsewhere, as an internal (Muslim or non-Christian) subjective devotion meets the conceptual space of a church architecture and ritual platform, a space in which a particular set of ritual behaviours (crossing oneself, using holy water) are constantly being suggested to the visitor by the space's construction and symbolism.

The outplaying of this tension, indeed a kind of *adab*-negotiation, manifested itself in a number of ways, almost all coming down to a series of gestures and acts. Most commonly, visitors/pilgrims would follow the route of visiting the images around the sanctuary, beginning with the patron saint, Anthony of Padua, lighting votive candles which are placed next to small displays of ex-voto offerings and then often sitting in the pews or going around to other parts of the church, similarly offering prayers. Often a ritual synthesis occurs between the pilgrim's own ritual forms and those suggested by the conceptual space of church architecture.

As an example, the stream of Turkish pilgrims would often be made up of people who would happily venerate the image of St Anthony via candle lighting. One woman who regularly came to the church typified this approach: Dressed in the typical fashion of a middle aged woman of the largely secular Muslim Istanbul middle-class,³⁶³ she showed intense veneration for the image of St. Anthony with three elements: the lighting of candles, the raising of hands in supplication while facing the statue and bringing the

³⁶² It is essential here not to totally conflate Turkishness with Muslimness as such, however much the more traditional way of categorisation would tend to plot identities. I don't know the level of Islamic religious commitment on the part of every devotee that I came across. It is only clear that those entering the space speaking Turkish and explicitly avoiding Christian ritual gestures were most likely from a background identified, currently, as Turkish and Muslim, in those cases where there was no opportunity to interview.

³⁶³ COUROUCLI: Sharing Nostalgia in Istanbul, 4. 'Literate secular middle class women'.

hands towards the face, as if to draw the *baraka*³⁶⁴ towards oneself. This is a gesture often seen in Islamic practice, particularly after reciting the Fatiha, the opening chapter of the Koran or making *dua*. After placing candles, she stood intensely with raised hands, combining the Christian veneration of imagery with a typically Islamic form of gesture. She merged her own spatial practice with that suggested by the construction of the environment.

In a similar way, there was one locus of ritual compromise that was particularly noticeable: the holy water fonts. Holy water fonts, in a Roman Catholic Church, are symbols of baptismal regeneration and one generally crosses oneself when entering a church, with the water from the font. Naturally, this would not fit with Muslim ritual and doctrinal norms at an official level and presumably, even at a folk-religious level there would be some awareness of discursive and practical difference. As Lefebvre says, 'Gestural systems embody ideology and bind it to practice'.³⁶⁵ For this reason, Muslim attendees at the church seemed to have a different relationship to the holy water font (and to many objects and gestures generally). I noticed, repeatedly, that on exiting the church, Muslim pilgrims were engaging with the font but instead of crossing themselves, they were taking the water and wiping it on the face or neck, perhaps places where they sought healing. Interestingly, in Ephesus, as in many shrines in Turkey and elsewhere, the water spouts found there are directly intended to enable devotees to take water for just such healing purposes, whereas in Sent Antuan, the holy water font seemed intuitively, to some, to be the place for appropriation of water to this end. Similarly, there were a number of subtle and small gestures and acts of appropriation that were noticeable, such as one

³⁶⁴ The Encyclopaedia of Islam defines *baraka* in the following terms: 'It can be translated by "beneficent force, of divine origin, which causes superabundance in the physical sphere and prosperity and happiness in the psychic order"...God can implant an emanation of *baraka* in the person of his prophets and saints: Muhammed and his descendents are said to be especially endowed with *baraka*. These sacred personages, in their turn, may communicate the effluvia of their supernatural potential to ordinary men, either during their lifetime or after their death.' H.A.R. GIBB(et. al. eds.): *The New Encyclopaedia of Islam*, G.S. COLIN: s.v. 'baraka' (Leiden 1986) 1032.

³⁶⁵ H. LEFEBVRE: *The Production of Space*, 215.

woman who would say 'Bismillah' when sitting down in a pew and, of course, all of the rituals here observed are in some way a process of appropriation of space by individuals or communities. These individuals either do this from within the tradition of the sacred space or they bring a distinct praxis from outside, in the case of mixed pilgrimage and some degree of merging always seems to take place. To say 'Bismillah' (a Muslim formula for sanctifying beginnings) while entering a church pew is a very micro-syncretic act.

There is no doubt that some Muslims pilgrims are aware that the role of the holy water fonts are for crossing oneself³⁶⁶. However, if we look with the eyes of basic sacrality, we see that such things as water may be seen as neutral sacred elements to be drawn upon in each individual's way, whether Christian, Muslim or non-religious as often pointed out to me by pilgrims at all of these shrines. And, indeed, water is an example of a consistent element (in both the generic and specific sense of the word) in the basic sacrality of spaces which can be visited by members of traditions that are otherwise more mutually exclusive in belief or practice. Water can be both sacred and non-sectarian because it cannot be physically inscribed with religious symbolism, nor can it be claimed as the exclusive property of any one community. At the same time, it is intimately associated with healing traditions and is revered by many cultures because of its role as the basic support of physical survival. Water is life and water is healing. Water is basic enough to be held skilfully in the hands of syncretic hybridity.

In yet another sanctified shared space where water is central, a group of pilgrims to whom I spoke (made up of Turkish and Non-Turkish Muslims) did in fact engage in a discussion on what was or was not allowed in a Christian held space. On entering the Ayazma (fountain church) within the Silivrikapı cemetery outside the Byzantine walls of Tophane, Istanbul to receive water, this

³⁶⁶ One informant in my fieldwork period, a Turkish woman working in a foreign research institute, with origins amongst the Turks of the island of Lesbos, said that many Turks would have historically had knowledge of the ritual gestures and protocol within the church from association with non-Muslim neighbours. While this may have been true historically, she emphasised that some might not know as much now, having fewer interactions with Non-Muslims at a local communal level.

group of pilgrims asked both whether they could make a Fatiha within the sanctuary and whether they could take off their shoes. Surprisingly, they were allowed to make a Fatiha but asked not to take off their shoes. Of the group, one went and kissed some of the icons. Initially they were told that removing their shoes would be ok and then that it would not be accepted. In this case we have a quick negotiation of the '*adab*' of spatial practice, clearly one that had not been previously encountered by the care takers and for which there was not a clear enough precedent to determine what would be going too far in the Islamic (dominant culture) utilisation of the space. This shrine is particularly interesting because, despite its purported popularity with Turks, I found it difficult to find many pilgrims with which to speak while visiting the location. Upon walking into the grounds of the shrine area and seeing bits and pieces of headstones and mausoleum art, I was reminded that this church had been looted during the highly disturbed days of 1955 when riots against non-Muslims had taken place after a bombing occurred at Atatürk's birth place in Thessalonica. The highly contested and the shared come together here and indeed are reminders of the work of Hayden and Sikand previously mentioned who highlight the competitive and contested nature of some sacred sites that may appear to be cooperative and ecumenical and approach or which have had periods of peaceful coexistence. Perhaps one also can see a split between the standing of the sanctuary in political consciousness as a symbol of Greek national identity and that of a healing place, approached from an entirely different angle and under entirely different circumstances.

Konya

In a more broadened view of what shared sacred space could mean in a more modern context that is not so much determined by its Muslim-Christian encounter as by a global one, I have observed certain parallels and differences between the shared pilgrimage places of Istanbul, Ephesus and Konya. Unlike a church such as Sent Antuan, which has developed a Muslim following over time, Konya is a city of recently heightened importance due to the appeal of the writings and teachings of Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi,

particularly among 'Western' people, often largely not traditionally religious. This is distinct from the world of churches sacred to Muslim Turkey, but useful in its parallels. While different in context, a number of patterns emerged while watching the varieties of ritual and non-ritual behaviours in the mausoleum of the sheikh that seemed relevant. Overwhelmingly, I was aware of the highly un-uniform approach to the space. In large part, the reason for this lies within the history of the space over the past 100 years. The shrine itself is considered a museum ('Mevlana Museum') rather than an active centre of Muslim and Sufi religiosity (officially) after the closing of the dervish lodges imposed by Ataturk in 1925. Indeed, the directors of the institution indicate this point by showing practitioners within this Islamic mystical stream in displays with statues of dervishes from a quaint but clearly ended Ottoman Era: This is Islamic mysticism in Turkey as fully museumised by the state. Entering into the sanctuary, a compromise has been struck so that, while visitors do not take off their shoes, as would be customary in a mosque or shrine of this kind, they do cover their shoes. This is an important example of *adab*-negotiation. While half of the shrine is clearly tolerated as a place of pilgrimage, the other half of the interior of the shrine is a museum space for the display of illuminated manuscripts and musical instruments held in the former lodge, alongside other objects of historical value. This strange juxtaposition leads visitors to be unsure of whether they are expected to behave as pilgrims or tourists and results in occasional tensions around what behaviour is most appropriate in interaction with the location. Within this religious yet officially secularised space, a very wide variety of visitors along a spectrum of religious and non-religious identities and affiliations converge. In my observation, this leads to a distinct tension around praxis that may appear or erupt at any time. Again, we are back to the very pivotal point of *adab* in ritual space as both discernment and negotiation.

Before going into the shrine, one has to pay a fee, as one does to go into Meryem Ana. In both cases it is explained that the charge is not for entry to the sacred place itself but for upkeep and, in the case of Konya, for museum entry. A variety of behaviours could be observed: Initiates of the Sufi tradition would sometimes enter with the customary covering of the left toe with the right toe

and this seemed to be the most sophisticated level of ritual knowledge connected to the location's lineage of spatial practice, an officially suppressed and marginal knowledge, subaltern in relation to the dominant secular discourse but inevitably making small subversive appearances. A fairly large number of people also came in a less ritually specialised mode to simply stand at the tomb of Mevlana Jellaludin Rumi with raised hands, to make petitions and honour the saint.

On several occasions, however, the negotiation of encounter with the space was considerably less clear, depending on the circumstances. At various times there were small eruptions of difference. On a particular day in which I was in the sanctuary/museum in order to gather notes on ritual activity, the variety of behaviours and the amount of dilemma-negotiation taking place in just a few hours was impactful for its ubiquity. On entering, a woman in front of me commented in Spanish, that if a head covering was not obligatory, then she would take hers off, and she immediately did so, somewhat defiantly. A large number of tourists were present that day and their pushing, talking and photographs was clearly irritating to pilgrims who, standing within the same places around the saints' tombs, were attempting to engage in prayer. A member of the Naqshibandi order began to wave his arms and generally show his irritation at having to share the space with people who seemed to have no sense of the reverence due to the space. Moving further through to the museum section (again in a crescent/circular pattern as in many sacred places) one sees a further contested space around the entirely museumised reliquary of the Prophet Muhammed's beard, enshrined in an elaborate jewelled container and owned by the sultan. While the majority of people walked by without demonstrating any devotion towards the object, a variety of different reactions were also to be noticed. A foreign conservative woman wearing the *niqab* of the typically Salafi influenced communities stood in respect but without making any pious gestures. Numbers of less conservatively dressed people kissed the glass case around the display and raised their hands in prayer in a space that is otherwise regarded as a museum display. In one case I also observed a German couple who read the explanation of the reliquary's contents out of curiosity about the activity taking place

there, as it was increasingly being surrounded by women in prayer, kissing the glass case. On fully realising why ritual was spontaneously taking place, the German woman placed her hands on the glass saying, respectfully, 'Muhammed.'

Conclusion

Productive tensions and negotiations are discernible patterns throughout the observation period at the above ambiguous and shared sacred sites, although often indirectly implied through other discourses. These negotiations and discourses are produced in the tension between two or more forms of practice and two or more ethno-religious identities. The negotiation seems to be both outwardly visible and subjective. In Meryem Ana there is negotiation going on which runs the gamut of all the examples seen elsewhere. Some negotiation is about polite communal coexistence, such as not objecting to the removal of Islamic symbolism from a Christian space, while some corresponds to a more personal reconciliation of one's faith tradition and identity with the most appropriate ritual acts in a given place of worship. It seems that, while sacred space is always a site of some certain contestation, loci of shared pilgrimage are particularly prone to contestation however much, in the 21st century a fair degree of civility has taken over in some of these locations. In the space of tension that this causes, discourse appears to explain and soothe these differences, or to maintain them.

In the sections that follow, important strands from these interviews and other similar factors that have appeared in the field will be taken up in order to explore some of the elements of traditionally and neo-traditionally³⁶⁷ multi-religious ritual sites. While one cannot offer an answer to the whys of shared pilgrimage with total finality and defined boundaries, it is certainly possible to look at the motifs appearing at the sites as contributing factors in the process of both the harmonious co-ritualisation of a site and the

³⁶⁷ By neo-traditional I refer to newer sites such as the House of the Virgin in Ephesus which are recent in comparison to sites dating from the Byzantine period, for example and the (in a discursive sense) reconstructed sites like the Mevlana Museum.

more negotiative aspects of its maintenance on both subjective and more concrete levels. Negotiation is ubiquitous in shared pilgrimage, whether we speak of negotiating identity, history, ritual behaviours (*adab*) as ways of relating, how venerated figures are imagined and understood or who is, indeed a pilgrim at all. What follows is an enquiry into these themes arising from the sites under consideration.

Chapter 5

Shared Pilgrimage and Imaginal Bricolage



*'Spaces are both physical and metaphorical, real and imagined'*³⁶⁸

Inseparably, imagination and activity inform and influence one another, but the functioning of imagination is particularly pronounced within religious and ritual space, with its orientation towards the symbolic and intangible. The view of imagination's role in a very particular ritual genre propounded here takes several turns to paint a picture of a somewhat hard to define element of religiosity. I

³⁶⁸ KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 13.

approach this from the angle of contemporary studies in culture, also adding a more emic element from within the Islamic cultural/religious context that is the focus. To begin, I will return to the cultural and religious context of the Virgin Mary's house in Ephesus, a site upon which thousands of (mainly Turkish) Muslims converge regularly, as the basis for the analysis moving on to a greater understanding of the relationship between spaces and the imagination connected to and working with space, seeking out common points that can illuminate the subject. I aim here to show the imagistic links between different cults and religious traditions, which are outplayed in the spatial practicing of Ephesus, an example akin to many similar sacralised cities and sites in other parts of the world. I examine here the phenomena around imagistic layering in ritual spaces from two angles: the vertical, which shows how layering takes place over periods of time in one location (the general area of the former ancient Ephesus) and horizontal (the way in which differing forms of traditional and non-traditional religious praxis converge at the same time with different ritual forms parallel to differing imaginal conceptions of the venerated figure, the simultaneous *coinciding* element, as it were). The core issues are bricolage as a way of religioning, continuities between forms of bricolage over time, bricolage between communities (imaginal bricolage) and the opening up of Third Spaces, described by the work of Edward Soja (Professor of Urban Planning, University of California Los Angeles) among others. Finally, in a brief excursus, I share something of the imagistic element's relevance to religiosity, as per a more emic viewpoint shared by some within the Muslim community as it appears in the work of Ibn Arabi, an Andalusian religious thinker of importance to the Ottoman Empire.

In the field of shared pilgrimage, it has not yet come to my attention that the more mythic levels of the rituals and practices under consideration have been taken into account. It has been noted that, historically, the Muslims and Christians of the Levant have often converged around spaces dedicated to the Virgin Mary and St George/Khidr, the most frequently.³⁶⁹ Something of the historical

³⁶⁹ COUROUCLI: 'Saint George L'Anatolien, Maitre des Frontieres', in *Religions Traversées*, 175-208 and H. HADDAD "'Georgic" Cults and Saints of the Levant', in *Numen*, 16:1 (1969).

context has been observed, but less has been said about the actual mechanism by which communities seem to so easily make these fluid associations between their respective hagiographies and cults. Ephesus, as a ritual location and gathering, has historically converged, as it were, around consistently female sacred figures, from an obscure aniconic cult of nature spirits and nymphs, to the Goddess Kybele, followed by Artemis Ephesia and, much later, the Virgin Mary in her Christian, but also Muslim incarnations.³⁷⁰ Similarly, according to Haddad, the figure of St. George being interchangeable with the Islamic Khidr is a long continuity from Pre-Christian deities and, the prophetic figure of Elijah from Judaic tradition.³⁷¹ This, I posit, forms part of an imaginal bricolage, in the sense that Lévi-Strauss employs the term, seeing the bricoleur (in this case the pilgrim) as the one who uses whatever she or he has at hand and available, creating the most useful construction 'even if their form and their origin are heterogeneous...'.³⁷² Without this imagistic, symbolic angle on the traditions under scrutiny, the subject will not have been done justice.

I further wish to elaborate on the subject of imagination and an imagistic approach to actual religious praxis, particularly in the context of lived religion. At the vertical level, we have an accretion of layers of religious practice over historical periods that is (figuratively and 'archaeologically') accretive. In the case of Ephesus' sacred sites, first there is a cult of nature spirits going through various stages, currently corresponding to a cult of the Virgin Mary. These phases correspond not only to historical periods and religious traditions, but also to narratives and most importantly 'images'. By images, I mean both those that are apparent and constructed for religious purposes and the more narrative-based, subjective images such as those found in Islam via written descriptions of the Prophet's appearance, the story of Mary's time in the Temple of Jerusalem in Koran and non-form based arts such as calligraphy. There is some imagistic component to most religions, whether there is, in fact, figurative art.³⁷³

³⁷⁰ KNIBBE: '*Via Sacra Ephesiaca*', 143 and JONES :*Geography*, 14.1.21.

³⁷¹ HADDAD: "'Georgic" Cults'.

³⁷² J. DERRIDA paraphrasing C. LÉVI-STRAUSS in '*The Structuralist Controversy*' (Baltimore 1970) 255.

³⁷³ The over-simplification that Islamic art is never figurative has long been disproven.

I contend that the relationship between religious traditions at an imaginal level and their spatial practice in physically constructed spaces is perhaps the most key in answering the questions of both how and why differing religious communities can revere the same sacred being in the same place and why there is continuity over time between figures of similar appearance, in proximity, over centuries such as Artemis Ephesia, the Virgin Mary and Hazret Meryem as she is known to Turkish Muslims...The missing element of the study of these phenomena is the fact that physical place corresponds to an imaginal space. In the imaginal, abstract spaces of the two or more communities that share a pilgrimage to the same holy person there is sufficient overlap to fuse symbolic elements, while different theologies may remain important. It is further my contention that one cannot access directly an understanding of many ritual, religious and semi-religious practices simply by employing an analytical form of logic that reduces devotion to simple physical acts or relies on texts. There must be further development of the capacity to understand ritual practice as activity that is direct and imaginative. Certainly, intellectual observation is important but the ambiguous reality of mythic thinking itself must be taken into account, I believe, when approaching the subject at hand, otherwise ritual actors are made into academics or theologians.

Some thinkers have already begun to explore this territory. Henri Corbin (1903-1978, Professor of Islamic Studies, Sorbonne) was amongst the first to not only put forward Ibn Arabi's ideas to a western readership but to place a great deal of emphasis on the imaginal as indispensable for understanding aspects of Islamic and Zoroastrian tradition as they have overlapped in Iranian religious pastiche. William Chittick (Islamic Studies, SUNY Stony Brook) says of Corbin's context, that he brought an important refreshment into the notions of symbolism and reason, effectively reintroducing the notion that one can have unique experiences of reality not only through discursive means, but also those of symbol, allegory and, of course, image.³⁷⁴ Even the employment of the term 'narrative'

³⁷⁴ W. CHITTICK: *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn Arabi's Metaphysics of the Imagination* (New York 1989) ix.

in a scholarly context suggests this allegorical, story-like, element of discourse, which of course evokes imagery. We must also look not only at physical space but the highly subjective imaginal space of allegory and symbolism because at a more practical level this allows us to understand the communal convergence on religious sites such as Ephesus, where not only people but their respective symbolic systems converge. In Henri Lefebvre's (1901-1991, Sociology, University of Paris, Nanterre) scheme, these are sites wherein multiple cultural and religious spaces of representation come together and are outplayed via a variety of spatial practices (the third element of his spatial triad).³⁷⁵

From there, however, I would like to take the further step of examining the relationship between what Edward Soja has called 'real and imagined' places and Thirdspace, considering that, like Kim Knott, he is building on the work of Henri Lefebvre whose ideas are the foundational keys of this project's understanding of spatiality. It is in this final aspect of the subject that the issue comes more fully on to the ground where the real and imagined spaces, in a sense (not with a literal chronology) finally come together, where spatial practice, images and 'Thirdspace' are indivisible.

A. Bricolage

Although the term has a wider employment, bricolage as a descriptive lens and hermeneutical tool is particularly associated with sociologist Claude Lévi-Strauss and Post-Modernism generally. Lévi-Strauss spoke of the *bricoleur* as the French equivalent for the handy man and jack-of-all trades, although a translator of Lévi-Strauss opines that there is no exact equivalent and, in the 'Savage Mind' text of Lévi-Strauss seems to emphasise the Anglo-Saxon 'handyman' aspect less and privilege more the idea of the bricoleur as one who draws well from a variety of materials.³⁷⁶ Here we can helpfully substitute ritual actor for bricoleur. Lévi-Strauss states:

³⁷⁵ LEFEBVRE: *The Production of Space*, 33.

³⁷⁶ C. LÉVI-STRAUSS: *The Savage Mind* (London 1966) 17.

‘The “bricoleur” is adept at performing a large number of tasks...the rules of his game are always to make do with “whatever is at hand”, that is to say, with a set of tools and materials that is always finite and is also heterogeneous ...but is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or destructions’³⁷⁷

In other words, the bricoleur has a certain symbolic capital which is enriched over time with older elements, brought together for their usefulness. This is more helpful than the more antiquated notion of syncretism. Instead we see the interaction of different religious layers as part of a facility with symbolic elements that need not be ‘contradictory’ to the one employing such elements, however much appearing to be ‘heterogeneous’.

Further, Derrida (within his more linguistic and textual field/framework) extrapolates:

‘If one calls bricolage the necessity of borrowing one’s concept from the text of a heritage which is more or less coherent or ruined, it must be said that every discourse is bricoleur’³⁷⁸

Every ritual practitioner is also a bricoleur. These metaphorical and linguistic explanations point to bricolage as a borrowing and facility with a variety sources, even when heterogeneous in origin. The notion that all text and all discourse is bricolage, neatly fits with the notion earlier mentioned (from the work of Post) that all ritual, no matter how long its lineage or how official it’s positioning in a given culture, is a work or bricolage, rather than an ex nihilo creation.³⁷⁹ The notion of bricolage is one that fittingly also describes ritual phenomena. This is foundational

³⁷⁷ LÉVI-STRAUSS: *The Savage Mind*, 18.

³⁷⁸ J. DERRIDA: ‘Structure Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences’ in J.NATOLI and L. HUTCHON (eds.): *A Postmodern Reader* (Albany 1993) 231.

³⁷⁹ POST: ‘A Symbolic Bridge’, 363.

to the understanding here and can be verified by examining a number of ritual forms. Whether one chooses any case study from the Bon/Shamanic confluence with Tibetan Buddhism or the influence of ancient Judaic temple ritual on Eastern Orthodox Liturgy, examples are numerous.

It is clear that both shared pilgrimage and popular religiosity are lived somewhat outside the mainstream of clerically directed, more uni-religious, 'pure' orthopraxy/doxy, although often permitted by the same clerical authority, or encouraged, within certain limits. Ephesus of course hosts bricological praxis. One need only look, for example, at the practice of making Islamic style ablutions at the water fountains dispensing waters that are believed to have healing properties because of their proximity to the House. In a quintessential act of ritual bricolage, an interviewee by the name of Halil, was taught by his 'strictly orthodox Muslim grandmother' in Turkey that he must always make *wudu* (the Islamic ritual ablutions made before prayer) at the fountain of healing water by the Virgin Mary's house whenever visiting. By doing so, she created a ritual mix in which the water was being appropriated not simply for the purposes of healing (as intended by the Roman Catholic community that created the fountain) but also layered together another meaning (ritual purity) while in parallel layering together two ritual forms, that of taking the water for oneself for healing in a simple way and taking the water in the form of ablution ritual. In one instant, a healing fountain is also an ablution fountain, as one would find in a mosque, both meanings simultaneously attributed to the simple element of water.

B. The Characteristics of Imaginal Space

On approaching the directly sub verbal experience and its limitations, Edward Soja (professor of City Planning at UCLA and the London School of Economics) has invoked the lines of Argentinean writer Jorge Luis Borges who wrote, in 'The Aleph':

'Then I saw the Aleph...and here begins my despair as a writer. All language is a set of symbols whose use among its speakers assumes a shared past. How then can I

translate into worlds the limitless Aleph, which my floundering mind can scarcely encompass?...*What my eyes beheld was simultaneous, but what I shall now write down will be successive, because language is successive.* Nonetheless, I will try to recollect what I can...³⁸⁰

He comments further on this that the image, the mythic symbol is immediate:

What one sees when one looks at geographies is stubbornly simultaneous but language dictates a sequential discussion, a linear flow of sentential statements, bound by that most spatial of earthly constraints, the impossibility of two words (or objects) occupying the same precise place (as on a page).³⁸¹

I would, however, go a bit further than Soja in looking at this text not only as a description of the limitations of language but also the limitation of language to convey insight that is not already mapped linguistically. With Soja, it must be said that geographies are indeed hard to capture in words and imaginal geographies perhaps even more so. For this reason, a new emphasis on the imagination has appeared from some corners of the academy, in an attempt to re-emphasise a largely forgotten aspect of knowledge, often drawing on the work of Henri Corbin. Corbin, not unlike his compatriot Massignon, was a renewer of thought who also drew on the resources of Islamic philosophy and Ibn Arabi, but also Shia esoteric traditions often referred to as *Irfan*.³⁸²

A further refinement of the intention here is to explore understandings of imaginal space from both a traditional and Muslim perspective (Ibn Arabi) and that of a western more post-modern approach (Lefebvre), while keeping in mind, as Lefebvre and Kim Knott indicate, that there is always a relationship between the imaginal and metaphorical space and that which we perceive, what we conceive and act-out are inseparable.

³⁸⁰ E. SOJA: *Postmodern Geographies* (London 1999) 2, emphasis added.

³⁸¹ SOJA: *Postmodern Geographies*, 2.

³⁸² H. CORBIN: *Temple and Contemplation* (Surrey 1986).

First, however, it is important to answer the question of whether imaginal space is in fact 'real'. There is the legitimate issue of whether this is being addressed through the lens of a sort of belief in a substantive (theological, as it were) imaginal realm. Indeed that is not the perspective that I am employing here. Rather, the most helpful point of view (over all) is that of Lefebvre who responds to the question paradoxically, stating that while abstract space is not concrete space, is not touchable, it is certainly not 'unreal' in the sense that it is a 'space' which is productive, thus the title of his work 'The Production of Space'. In it, he states:

'What is the mode of absolute space? Is it imagined or is it real?...Imaginary? Of course! How could an 'absolute' space have a concrete existence? Yet it must also be deemed real, for how could the religious space of Greece or Rome *not* possess political 'reality'.

There is thus a sense in which the existence of absolute space is purely mental, and hence 'imaginary'. In another sense, however, it also has a social existence, and hence a specific and powerful 'reality'. The 'mental' is realised in a chain of 'social' activities because, in the temple, in the city, in monuments and palaces, the imaginary is transformed into the real...³⁸³

The position taken here is in harmony with the views of Knott and Lefebvre, with the caveat of a brief excursus (in the end) that draws in the view of a widely respected Islamic mystic whose discourse was integral to the religious establishment in the Ottoman Empire. I include this classical view because it is an emic commentary from within the culture studied. Not being a product of the contemporary western academy, it is substantive in its view of the imaginal element as, while not 'concrete' as such, theologically real, at least. Yet, at the same time, some post-modern thinkers (notably Ian Almond of Bosphorus University) have compared Ibn Arabi's sense of the imaginal realm's contingency and liminality to Derridean notions of *diferance*.

³⁸³ LEFEBVRE: *The Production of Space*, 351.

Finally, it is important to note, with Lefebvre, that the imagistic element of spatial analysis is unavoidable. It is ever—present and constantly influential:

‘Representational spaces, one the other hand, need obey no rules of consistency of cohesiveness. Redolent with imaginary and symbolic elements, they have their source in history – in the history of a people as well as in the history of each individual belonging to that people. Ethnologists, anthropologists and psychoanalysts are students of such representational spaces, whether they are aware of it or not, but they nearly always forget to set them alongside those representations of space which coexist, concord or interfere with them; they even more frequently ignore social practice...’³⁸⁴

So, representational space, which is the imagery of culture, in a sense, is easily ignorable, despite the fact that these spaces are a product of a given people’s history (and, therefore, religion as well) and the relationship of these spaces to social practice (in this case, social *ritual* action) is so intimate. As we begin to combine this element of the representational-spatial as based in the imaginal, with the bricological nature of not only ritual but of the imagistic, it is essential to have clarified this point: that imagination, action and space are in constant interrelationship, beyond the formal boundaries of religious architecture and formally sanctioned religiosity.

C. Imagistic Bricolage and Layering

‘Now let us make the fantastic proposition that Rome were not a human dwelling place, but a mental activity with just as long and varied a past history; that is, in which nothing once constructed had perished, and all the

³⁸⁴ LEFEBVRE: *The Production of Space*, 41.

earlier stages of development had survived alongside the latest.³⁸⁵

It has been my intention in addressing certain issues that arise in the course of fieldwork, to draw on less than mainstream or commonly known sources, so as to have a feel for the range of manifestations of Islam that exist. As we know, much modern discourse about Islam is somewhat impoverished and often focuses on a very mainstream (theoretically normative) view of what Islam is in theory and in practice. It may even be as narrow as purely focusing on clerical understandings of Islam, as though these were universally applicable. Here I hope to first address the role of imagination in shared pilgrimage via Edward Soja and then make a brief excursus regarding the practice of Islam from the point of view of the mystics who have placed an interesting emphasis on the role of imagination, as a counter to the assumption that Islam lacks imagination (because it lacks iconography) and from there graduating on to how this appears in the field of ritual activity and helps to answer something of the query regarding what brings otherwise distinct members of distinct religious and ethnic groups to the same table. In order to focus on the role of imagination, I will first touch on immediate ways, in the modern world that we see the role of the image in convergence and then go on to the role of the Image and Imaginal in Islam, chiefly in the work of Ibn Arabi, proceeding from a Pre-Modern Arab Religious thinker to a Post-Modern American Geographer.

Examples of imagistic bricolage, stemming from imagination and becoming practice, or art, are numerous. Of late, in fact, we see increasingly that a convergence of imagery is being used to represent communal convergence in almost 'iconic' and 'syncretic' way. One has the sensation when looking at this symbolism that a conscious 'syncretism' or hybridity is being offered to the viewer, one purposefully created to convey a message. There is a particular semiotic that can be observed particularly in places where there is communal tension or in Europe where issues around immigration and the current perception of a civilizational irreconcilability

³⁸⁵ S. FREUD: *Civilisation and Its Discontents* (New York 2005) 17-18.

between the West and the Islamic world are particularly pronounced in media discourse.

One particular image found throughout the Netherlands circa 2009 created a sensation of fusion between Islamic and Dutch motifs in the form of a hand hennaed hand with a windmill design. I take the position that an important element of inter-religious and inter-cultural convergence is the way in which it manifests imagistically. The 'Ik Geloof in Dialoog' ('I believe in dialogue.') campaign, using this image, was marketed by the Dutch government in places as public as bus stops to emphasise not only social harmony but the harmonious fusion of identities.

In a number of ways, the attempt to, at an artistic and imaginal level, synthesis or show otherwise disparate cultures as harmonious, is particularly popular and especially so when invoking shared history. One only need look at the number of documentaries appearing on the history of the encounter of the three cultures of Al-Andalus and the large number of musical groups dedicated to fused music from two or three of these Golden Age three cultures such as the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music and innumerable similar projects and compositions.

In a similar way, it was consistently brought to my attention in both the literature about Ephesus and in the discourse of the Turks who I met there, that Meryem Ana Evi is just such a place of convergence that takes on an emblematic quality, in collective imagination, as a meeting point indicating the potential for harmony between otherwise distinct religious groups. This leads, then, to this section's focus on the role of the emblematic place where a virtual world seems to have developed around the notion that these particular sanctuaries both draw disparate groups to the same holy figure for veneration but also become emblematic of the potential for harmonic convergence. There are, then, several issues here including place of convergence as emblematic, holy figures (often the Virgin Mary and St George, when we are speaking of shared pilgrimage in the Levant, for example)³⁸⁶ as virtual figures of convergence and places as occupying a virtual space (described by Freud's example of the meta-historical iconic Rome) around

³⁸⁶ HADDAD "'Georgic' Cults'.

which communities converge physically and metaphorically (as per Knott).

D. Soja and Thirdspace

Before exploring the more emic and substantialist viewpoint that sees the imaginal realm as having a kind of inherent reality, it is helpful to look to Edward Soja as an example of a post-modern voice with a more fluid sense of the role of imagination, which he closely marries to the notion of what he calls 'Thirdspace' and relevant social issues, founding his analysis on the work of Lefebvre whose 'perceived space' and 'conceived space' are particularly highlighted here. Soja's particular perspective, however, brings the spatial triad of Lefebvre into sharper focus through Soja's notion of 'real and imagined spaces'. This is a 'Thirdspace' which Soja speaks of as the space wherein one recognises both imaginal and physical space as intertwined, a space wherein many social issues can be raised because of its otherness, its excludedness from the typical binary discourses, a notion that has taken the imagination of many particularly activist-scholars who he invokes in 'Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other Real-and-Imagined-Places'.³⁸⁷ Criticising the focus on the physical, the conceptual or simply on a binary of the two, he says:

'I have chosen to call this new awareness Thirdspace and to initiate it as a product of a "thirding" of the spatial imagination, the creation of another mode of thinking about space that draws upon the material and mental spaces of the traditional dualism but extends well beyond them in scope, substance and meaning. Simultaneously real and imagined and more (both and also...), the exploration of Thirdspace can be described and inscribed in journeys to "real-and-imagined" (or perhaps "realandimagined"?) places...'

³⁸⁷ E. SOJA: *Thirdspace: Journey to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford 1996) 106-139.

The application of this to the main case studies is a line of enquiry here. To reiterate, a place of ritual convergence is simultaneously a 'realandimagined' place, like all places. There are perceptions of important centres and there are meanings attributed to locations, natural sites, city centres and peripheries and of course, especially sacred sites, where a great deal of meaning attribution is concentrated. As a small concentrated landscape of meaning, the house of the Virgin Mary in Ephesus, like other shared pilgrimage shrines, has at least two systems of knowledge, ritual, belief, and discourse attributed to it, even projected on to it. Of those systems there are a variety of Christianities and Islams, plus other traditions and more secular or non-affiliated ways of being and knowing that appropriate the space.

For each tradition or alternative view point and for each individual approaching the site, there are certain cultural-religious associations that are projected on to the site. In this sense there is an Islamic Mary (Hazret Meryem in Turkish) there is a Christian Mary, there is a Mary attributed to the site that is from neither background or some combination of the above. Further, there is Artemis Ephesia, all in some way associated with the site/area.

The employment of 'Thirdspace' is helpful because it goes even a step further than re-integrating mental and physical space, but sees this thirding/reunion as 'the creation of another mode of thinking about space that draws upon the material and mental spaces of the traditional dualism *but extends well beyond them*' as Soja states above. Gloria Anzaldua describes this Thirdspace as somewhat brutal and as a space of interculturality and interlinguisticness reflected in the physical world of the US/Mexico border: she calls it:

'The Homeland, Aztlán, *El Otro Mexico*, the 'other' Mexico, "*una herida abierta*"³⁸⁸ where the Third World grates against the First and bleeds. And before a scab

³⁸⁸ 'an open wound' (Spanish).

forms its haemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country – a border culture”³⁸⁹

In this case, Soja is going in the direction of looking at space from a point of view informed by the experience of otherness, the experience of not fitting into the ever-present binary oppositions that leave many seeking for an alternative view of reality, one that addresses their own sense of not fitting into these binaries, but instead belonging in a third space, as it were. So there are two (yet not binary) issues that appear: that of the relationship between mental (imagistic/imaginal, in our approach) and physical space and also the further more conceptual and social issues of liminality and marginality. This is an element that is only partly relevant in terms of shared pilgrimage. Yet it is possible to see this liminal and ambiguous thirdness as an element of ritual space as well.

As discussed in the previous chapter on identity, shared pilgrimage does not seem to form a space in which identities are particularly blurred, necessarily. My fieldwork did not produce responses that were particularly ambiguous in terms of identity articulation. To the contrary, Muslims who were visiting churches were very much Muslims visiting churches in the terms they described themselves. However, many were not mosque-attending (this is primarily an issue for men) and in that sense perhaps found an unofficially religious space in an outside tradition. At the very least, one of my informants indicated that he was brought Christian shrines at times, as a child, because his mother wanted him ‘to know that people don’t just go to mosques...there are other religions...’ which certainly speaks of a shared space coming to be representative of an alternative religious motif, neither Christian nor Muslim, in the strictest sense, but a space of possibility and ecumenism, transcending the typical borders of the conceptual space of religious architecture and its attendant limitations, for a moment.

Having established this observation, however, the significant point is that a ‘thirding’ of space, as Soja puts it, is a necessary key for understanding shared pilgrimage praxis. This is where many of

³⁸⁹ SOJA: *Thirdspace*, 128 quoting G. ANZALDUA: *Borderlands/La Frontera, the New Mestiza* (San Francisco 1987) 2-3.

the above insights come together. There is the archetypal Rome of the imagination, as Freud points out. Similarly, Knott mentions in her elaboration of the point that space is both metaphorical and physical, that in a Vaishanava Hindu context, Braja, the city of Krishna, is very much real to devotees on both the geographical and metaphorical/metaphysical levels.³⁹⁰ In this she agrees with Lefebvre that while one need not believe that abstract space is 'real' as such, one cannot deny that it exists in so far as the conceived space has been concretised into forms. What Soja adds to this very relevant set of observations is that important thirding in which space becomes fully and at once both real and imagined. While this is helpful to those who seek an alternative to the previous binaries, it is also relevant in the way that it allows to see not only a trialectic but a simultaneity as a space is both simultaneously 'realandimagined'. In the case of shared pilgrimage, the applicability is in the Thirdspace as one which is multiple. The thirding of two different communities, if sufficiently overlapping imaginistically in the arena of veneration for an archetype can also overlap and share physically, making shared pilgrimage both 'realandimagined'.

E. Excursus: Ibn Arabi and an Islamic View of the Imaginal

Muhyiddin Ibn al Arabi (1165 –1240 CE) is the most central figure for an Islamic (though not universally accepted) substantive, religious and mystical view on the internal world within which prayer and spiritually imagined forms take shape. This parallels, but is distinct from, Lefebvre's notion of the space of representation. Here we will look at the notion of the imaginal level as understood by him, so as to better articulate the role of perceived and inward figures in the sharing of pilgrimage space. The issues presented are indeed very subtle ones and draw upon thinkers (Smith, Lefebvre and Ibn Arabi) who have done a great deal of work and around whom whole schools of thought have coalesced. For that reason, I begin here with Ibn Arabi, focused

³⁹⁰ KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 13.

tightly on his understanding of the role of imagination and the imaginal, rather than venturing into an extended contextualisation of his entire cosmology. Similarly, as Lefebvre is explained in more detail elsewhere, the particular focus of this section is the way in which, alongside Ibn Arabi and others, he is capable of commenting on the relationship of self-space-action, with both addressing the phenomena via differing constructions, the role of imagination. While Ibn Arabi does so towards an ontological and cosmological end within the framework of his Islamic esoteric perspective, Lefebvre directly discusses the perceptive level of the human being in its relationship to space and acting/interacting with/in space. The two, then, have some complementarity for this study, however much situated in different milieus.

When one begins to discuss imagery in an Islamic context, immediate objections are raised and such objections are indeed understandable. In the tome 'Seven Doors to Islamic Spirituality' John Renard reports that, when discussing Islamic figurative art, the first response from scholars of visual art is 'I always heard Muslims don't do figures...' However, he says, 'One can draw a distinction between sacred and religious art. Islamic sacred arts, those defined by their direct relations to worship and prayer, seem never to employ images of humans or animals, and rarely of products of human making, such as buildings. Religious arts, on the other hand...used only outside cultic settings, often include anthropomorphic imagery.'³⁹¹

That is to say, in places of worship, calligraphy and abstract art reign, while outside of the precincts of formal worship, there is more space for more figurative art, such as images of the Prophet Muhammed (often veiled) in manuscripts and figures of the family of the Prophet (Ali, Hassan, Hussein and Fatima) in some Shia homes and other contexts. As with anything in the very fluid world of ritual, there are always exceptions. Alevis and Bektashis in Turkey, for example, do indeed sometimes have figurative art within their places of worship, particularly the Twelve Imams, Hajj Bektash, and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, although such human figures are not venerated, as icons are. So, to every rule there is an

³⁹¹ J. RENARD: *Seven Doors to Islam: Spirituality and the Religious Life of Muslims* (Berkeley 1996) 136.

exception, when discussing the patterns observable in the liquid world of ritual. Of course, one important exception to the comment of Renard is that depictions of buildings are very present in Islamic art even in the devotional space, when those buildings are the Haram Sherif (mosque of the Kaaba) in Mecca or the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. Salafi and Wahabbi interpretations of the Prophet Muhammed's Sunnah and various hadith, incline them to be suspicious of all forms of figurative imagery.

The role of the image, internally or externally is not emphasised in mainstream Islam. Most scholars would agree that Islam is a tradition emphasising divine communication through word, sound and narrative. The communication of religious truth through story is crucial, going back to the most key text of Islam, the Koran itself. When I speak of imagery here I am speaking of the imagistic world of the psyche and to do this I am drawing on a few thinkers that have emphasised this aspect of Islamic practice. Because they do remain non-mainstream for most Muslims, it would be logical to query the inclusion of this line of thought. First of all, I include them because some, such as Ibn Arabi, who spoke of the Imaginal and its liminal space, 'the Barzakh', have had a significant impact within certain Muslim communities. The Ottoman Empire's theologians tended to emphasise and sympathise with the work of Ibn Arabi, so much so that in the time of Sultan Selim I, it was a crime punishable by law, based on a *fatwa* by the empire's chief religious leader (*Sheikh al Islam*) to speak against the teachings of Ibn Arabi.³⁹² In more recent times, the writings of the revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini³⁹³ on the subject of Shia gnosis, drew upon the thought of Muhiyiddin Ibn al Arabi and an entire society of his same name is dedicated to the sheikh's work at Oxford.³⁹⁴

This little known tradition within Islam that focuses on the role of imagination, while not dominant, may have some

³⁹² M. TAHRALI: 'A General Outline of the Influence of Ibn Arabi on the Ottoman Era' *The Journal of the Muhiyiddin Ibn Arabi Society*, 26 (1999) 45-53.

³⁹³ S. HIRTENSTEIN: Ibn Arabi in the 'Far West': Visible and Invisible Influences *The Journal of the Muhiyiddin Ibn Arabi Society*, 26 (1999) 3.

³⁹⁴ Muhiyiddin Ibn Arabi Society: <http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/> retrieved 12 March 2011.

ambient influence on Islamic thought and practice and would be a helpful conceptualisation of the issue, even if it were a product of Buddhist cosmology, for example. This aspect of Islam is in no way being drawn on here to *prove* anything about Muslim devotional practice. Instead, it is intended to be illuminative of a general approach to sacred sites and devotion that is of interest, coming back again to the most key word in terms of the function of this study: contextualisation. It is particularly relevant to this study because a) it comes from an Islamic (albeit sometimes controversial) source and b) it represents a lesser known form of discourse in western religious thought and scholarship and thus coincides with the stated intention of this project to draw on emic and subaltern discourses. It is, finally, also key because c) it does highlight the fact that there is a strong universalist trend amongst some Muslims, a trend exemplified by Ibn Arabi and those like him, a trend I came across consistently in the field at the level of practiced, grounded, less theoretical/theological religion. It is present at multiple levels. Pilgrims to shared shrines have often said to me that a holy man or woman is relevant no matter what their religious origins or 'a saint is for the whole world' as the Turkish idiom has it.³⁹⁵ This is one point of view amongst many, in the Islamic context, but it is one that is especially relevant here, for its appearance in the field. Further, it is in the work of Henri Corbin that a discussion of not only Ibn Arabi but many other Islamic mystics who have placed an emphasis on the Imaginal, that we will find much of the relevant information, as translated, by him, from Persian. Corbin commented in particular on the overlapping of the figures of Angels and *Spenta* in the overlaying of Islamic and Zoroastrian themes in Iranian cosmology. Such observation of pastiche, collage and bricolage is not impossible once one sees the pattern in this style of merging.

Briefly, Ibn Arabi says a few important things about the imagination: For Ibn Arabi, the Imaginal is fundamental and even cosmological. Indeed, he even sees the universe as itself imagination and that which is manifest by divine imagination. In William Chittick's (Religious Studies, Stony Brook College, Long

³⁹⁵ HASLUCK: *Christianity and Islam*, 300.

Island University) book, 'The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn Arabi's Cosmology':

'When looking at the cosmos, it is frequently necessary to step out of a dualistic framework and focus on the relativities and shifting nature of relations. Ibn Al-Arabi often employs the term imagination in this context. The term designates intermediate reality, everything that shares the qualities of two sides, anything that needs to be defined in terms of other things...It is synonymous with *barzakh*³⁹⁶ or isthmus.'³⁹⁷

Further, Chittick observes, in a complimentary work by the name of 'The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn Arabi's Metaphysics of the Imagination',

'Though more real and 'subtle' than the physical world, the world of imagination is less real and denser than the spiritual world, which remains forever invisible as such.'³⁹⁸

That is to say that, as explained above but now in more cosmological terms, the relativity of the imaginal is in its liminal status as the very real region between the fully spiritual and the physical, for Ibn Arabi. The imaginal is, relatively, very real unlike the imaginary. Chittick points out that the noted 20th Century orientalist Henri Corbin was the first to coin the term:

'In Islam, the later, intellectual tradition never tires of discussing the imaginal realm as the locus wherein spiritual realities are seen...'³⁹⁹

³⁹⁶ The concept of the *barzakh* is important and frequently employed by Ibn Arabi. Referring to a liminal space/time between stages, the term is found in the Koran, 23:100 (Surah al Muminin) and 55:19 (Surah arRahman) amongst other verses.

³⁹⁷ W. CHITTICK: *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn Arabi's Cosmology* (Albany 1998).

³⁹⁸ CHITTICK: *The Sufi Path*, ix.

³⁹⁹ CHITTICK: *The Sufi Path*, ix.

Thus, Ibn Arabi reflects a certain trend within Islamic philosophy and mysticism (rather than just his own ideas) particularly important at various times and in various Islamic mystical schools, as explained by Henri Corbin (1903-1978) in a number of his works which were the first to put forward these ideas in the western academy. It is partly for this reason that he is included here. Despite the fact that Ibn Arabi has been anathematised and marginalised (at best) by some clerical establishments (while held up by others), his influence is great and his capacity to reflect various strata of Islamic tradition that would not have otherwise been preserved, is noteworthy.

Macrocosm, Microcosm and Imagination

In Ibn Arabi's thought, imagination is a divine quality, as we have seen, but it is equally a microcosmic reality within the human, as seen, for example, in dreams, which he classes as 'contiguous imagination' (*al-khayal al-muttasil*) verses unbounded imagination (*al-khayal al-mutlaq*).⁴⁰⁰ In the first case, the reference is to the imaginal *barzakh* within the self, mediating between the absolute spiritual world and the body, whereas the unbounded imagination is a cosmic intermediary between physical creation and utter non-existence, the hypothetical 'Void'.

Abstract space, then, is not only an issue for Lefebvre but also for Ibn Arabi, although Ibn Arabi frames the issue in the more classical terms of Microcosm/Macrocosm. Speaking of the Void as pure abstraction, it is important to note that, according to Chittick, Ibn Arabi uses the concept of a theoretically empty space strategically, in order to make further points, although no such Void exists outside the imagination. Of Ibn Arabi, Chittick states:

'He seems to be saying that in order for us to conceive of bodily things, we have to imagine an empty space that they occupy. But, of course, if there were no bodily

⁴⁰⁰ There is also a discontiguous imagination found at the human level, as explained by Ibn Arabi (called *munfasil*) but this is generally the imaginal level of Prophets, rather than ordinary persons. CHITTICK: *The Sufi Path*, 332.

dimensions whatsoever – if there were an absolute nothingness – we would not find the empty space. An absolute nothingness cannot exist for us to find. Hence, the void remains a useful supposition...but it has no existence except in the imagination.⁴⁰¹

Ibn Arabi and Lefebvre, therefore, are in agreement in terms of their discussion of abstract and empty spaces as paradoxically both necessary and not ultimately real. The metaphorical space in which space's imaginal counterpart exists is a useful but not substantially real place, while having reality at a metaphysical level for Ibn Arabi and being real in its productivity for Lefebvre. In either case, the space in which a Marian symbolism can overlap imaginally does produce an overlapping at a cult level within the pilgrimage places that Muslims, Christians and others share, effectively. In that sense, Lefebvre is indeed ratified in this field of ritual practice, with the caveat that here we have looked at spatial practice first, before casting our gaze back to its motivations in the perceptual and imaginative.

Conclusion

To summarize, a number of angles provide helpful points of view in opening up a discussion around the role of religious imagination. From a substantialist and emic perspective, Islamic esoteric thought has taken up the subject of the imagination in some detail as shown in the work of Corbin on Shia Islam and, from a Sunni perspective it has been extrapolated within the work of Muhiyiddin Ibn Arabi. In the case of Ibn Arabi, the main focus here, there is some overlap with the more contingency-based postmodern approaches to subjective imagery because of his contention that the notion of what is in the imaginal and liminal realm is always in relationship to other levels of reality. It is the in-betweenness of imagination that makes it, *de facto*, the realm that it is, with its condition of mediation between pure spirit and concrete form within Ibn Arabi's cosmology.

⁴⁰¹ CHITTICK: *The Self-Disclosure of God*, 61.

While the western thinkers of interest on the subject do not speak of the imaginal as a distinct realm as such, they do locate and label it in order to be able to describe and work with this element of spatial practice. For Lefebvre, the imaginative is connected to all elements of his triad. While he does not give 'abstract' space (the space of religious imagination) a world of its own, he does say that it effectively exists in the sense that it is productive of space. It is intimately connected to his notion of representational space as a collection of imagery, symbolism and other artefacts of culture and religion that are held within certain societies, as the building blocks of their spaces, especially those less functional spaces such as places of worship (as opposed to the more conceptual space found in office buildings). In all cases, it is an abstract and imaginative sense of space that animates spatial practice and the influence equally flows in the opposite direction with the conceptually designed influencing the imaginal.

Knott and Soja further refine this by emphasising the inseparability of acted space and ritual from the imagination, with Soja proposing a Thirdspace, a 'realandimagined' space that is entirely beyond not only the trialectics of Lefebvre but the binary thinking of the physical and the imaginative as distinct at all. For Soja, the real and the imagined are a Thirdspace beyond any theoretical dichotomy which can only exist in the abstract. If Soja is correct (as I believe he is) this has an impact on these liminal, third, unofficial and in-between spaces, sanctuaries frequented by those who, in a certain purist sense, 'shouldn't' be interested in them. If space is both real and imagined, we must examine how shared sacred space is imagined, diversely.

In terms of its contribution to the theme, this brief introduction to the subject is another piece in the contextual puzzle, as it were, shedding light via a few key concepts that perhaps explain something of both the why and how of a practice that otherwise remains somewhat anomalous or even unknown to most because of its seemingly epistemic, creedal transgression. But the reality persists. Not only do practitioners of more popular elements within a given religious stream engage in ritual at sanctuaries belonging to other religious communities, but they also do so in somewhat predictable patterns, with Muslims revering the sage Khidr in the form of St. George, for example, but they also

often bring their own more Islamic understanding of a figure such as the Virgin Mary and their own forms of revering her holy sites, creatively combining it with what is practiced by Christians in the same location. It has further been noted that, as in the case of Ephesus, it is not unheard of for a Muslim-Christian cult of the Virgin to be layered on top of an earlier Goddess site. Rather than view these practices as somehow simply a carry-over of Paganism, or a Crypto-Christianity among Muslims (thus denying these later communities their own self-definition) I instead place forward the model of imagistic bricolage as a more helpful device for understanding the practice. Quite simply, when symbolic features are held in common (motherly archetypal qualities, for example) there can be both a vertical and horizontal convergence of what otherwise might seem irreconcilable as religious/ritual practitioners practice their creative bricolage drawing on the symbols and ritual practices of the past layers in their holy places (the identification of the Virgin Mary with a location also sacred to Artemis) or horizontally across communities (as Muslims identify the Koranic Mary with the Christian Mary). When the imaginal is seen as connected, the ritual can be as well, thus shared pilgrimage. There is, as it were, a convenient hook for a hat and the variety of hats on such a hook are not the same, but they certainly fit within the same place well for 'practical' reasons. Similarly, people of differing religious backgrounds may emphasise or de-emphasise their creedal differences, but they may still find common cause in a given sanctuary, one repeating element in this is that of a symbol-hook allowing for images (physically represented or not) to fit well together. This in turn contributes to an environment suitable to shared pilgrimage. This is one node, one nexus point of third space, a space both concrete and imagined, a space analysed by Soja, Lefebvre, Knott and others, a space that is more than simply a series of elements converging, but which is best understood through those constituents. For the third spaces under consideration here, religious imagination is not only an element of spatial analysis, but one that holds some key to the somewhat mysterious meta-religious element of the praxis found within places such as the Virgin's House in Ephesus.

Chapter 6

Adab as Moral Principal in Ritual and Being



‘...we must first forsake any single definition. *Adab* is defined by the very multiplicity of its uses.’⁴⁰²

Halil is a middle aged man, a practicing Muslim and part of a Turkish Sufi order. As a child he was brought by his very religious

⁴⁰² I. FARAG: ‘Private Lives, Public Affairs: the Uses of Adab’ in A. SALVATORE: *Muslim Traditions and Modern Techniques of Power* (Münster 2001) 94.

grandmother to the House of the Virgin Mary where, he says, there were originally two rooms, one for Christians and one for Muslims. Muslims would show their respects in the Roman Catholic chapel, with its altar and statue of the Virgin, but they would proceed to the second room in order to perform the ritual prayer of prostrations, where the Catholic religious order provided them with space. Halil mentioned that Christians and others who passed from one room to the next would, upon seeing that they were entering a space in which Muslims were at prayer, immediately remove their shoes as they walked around the Muslims, as if they had entered a mosque. This has changed since his childhood, now that the Islamic prayer space has largely been made into an extension of the chapel, something Halil explains as simply part of the fluctuations that occur as different clerics administer the church, with differing approaches to the limits of spatial practice. Zeynep, a younger woman, was taught to pray outside the church, out of respect for the fact that the church is not a mosque, a product of a later generation that did not have much experience of the dual-rituality that the House once maintained, albeit under the ownership of the Catholic Church. In both cases, whatever the constellation of spatial practices, whatever the changes in its practiced and conceptual maintenance, a certain principal of mutual ritual boundaries and respect seems to persist. While observing the dynamics of spatial negotiation in mixed religious sites in Turkey, I came across a number of respondents who very concretely spoke of how space was negotiated between Christians and Muslims in the sacred places, particularly Ephesus, and all fundamentally functioned because of a ritual respect. To draw on Arab and Islamic terminology this will be conceptualised as a form of *adab* mutually agreed between Muslims and Non-Muslims (because Christians and other communities share similar values around ritual space) both through formal boundaries and spontaneous agreement, articulated or simply implicit/unidentified.

In order to understand the intentionality directed towards the fair use of ritual space within the shared *temenos*, the Islamic notion of *adab*, as refined, good and correct behaviour is perhaps one of the most important concepts on both a practical and an abstract level. Further, it is an example of the more emic discourse which is implicit within religious praxis in Turkey along with

much of the Islamic and Eastern Mediterranean world. Of course, not all behaviour by Muslims, much less Non-Muslims, in Islamic societies can be directly linked to *adab* as such, especially not in a modern context within which, in many cases, traditional values are increasingly changing or eroding. However, there is undoubtedly a genre of a general 'correct behaviour and mode of being' that exists in Islamic culture and is parallel to what we would find in certain circumstances in a number of cultures (one can think of examples even in the Western world, such as behaviour around royalty, protocol at weddings⁴⁰³ etc...). However, the specific concept of *adab* is useful for a number of reasons: First, it is a helpful construction of behavioural norms, because while there may be some analogous rubrics in Western culture, in this context the concept is very holistic and has been very pervasive at times, being thus a relevant aspect of Islamic spatial practice, amongst other ways of acting. Second, it is a pervasive and ambient influence, even when not directly invoked in a ritual or other setting. Indeed, it is generally poor *adab* to comment on another's *adab* and so it remains a highly embedded concept within the culture, only being named when necessary, such as in places where it is particularly emphasised (e.g. Sufi lodges, where a statement on *adab* will sometimes be posted on the wall or simply the reminder, '*Edep Ya Hu*' in a Turkish Mevlevi lodge, for example). So, while one can often not point to any one act or statement and label it as '*adab*' it is useful to have awareness of *adab* as an emic construction from within Islamic culture that influences notions of right behaviour and, in more traditional and religious settings, is more directive of the behaviour of Muslims and those with an Islamicate cultural influence who are not Muslim.

In this section, I approach the subject and its application to shared pilgrimage ritual through a number of channels. The initial approach will be to look at the background and fundamentals of the principal of *adab* from its early history in Pre-Islamic Arabia, the foundational works of Islam and historical development into various sub-disciplines of etiquette and literature. Further, we look at the more abstract issues with *adab* as a principal underlying

⁴⁰³ Some parallel can be drawn between *adab* and the ancient Greek and early Christian notion of *paideia*. FARAG: 'Private Lives', 93.

action and come to a working definition of the term. The next step will be to look at *adab* by scenario, first seeing how it has been employed in recent Turkish history and further looking at *adab*'s role in Islamic culture as a form of discernment in ritual tension, particularly working out differing priorities in a space of religious and social significance. A third element of contextualisation is to look at a narrative from the life of the Prophet Muhammed regarding the use of a mosque by Christians as a space sharing *adab*-dilemma, to place the issue within an early strand of Islamic sources, as understood by Reza Shah-Kazemi of London's Ismaili Institute. I close by touching on both the value of a harmonious etiquette being maintained between Muslims and Christians in Turkey (the main concentric ring of context) as an underpinning for shared pilgrimage and cautioning that by understanding the element of *adab* as fundamental to smooth processes we cannot lose sight of the fact that forms of *adab* have also been used to maintain oppressive relationships between communities. *Adab* must be understood, but not romanticised. Further, it should be borne in mind that only very rarely can one cite a formal example of *adab* in any classical sense, as 'explaining' the behaviours of pilgrims in the Islamic world directly. There is no one direct 'cause' for the functioning of shared pilgrimage. Rather, *adab*-based values are found to be present. The theme that unites all elements of this project is contextualisation. This examination of *adab* is no more or less than an exercise in pointing towards one element in the context of shared pilgrimage.

A. Definitions and Fundamentals

Adab is a subtle or explicit code of behaviour described variously and taking on many forms and meanings. In addition to the early mentioned definition of Barbara Metcalf of the University of California Davis ('proper discrimination of correct order, behaviour and taste')⁴⁰⁴ there is also that of Ira Lapidus, contributing to the volume of Metcalf, who gives a definition that

⁴⁰⁴ METCALF: *Moral Conduct and Authority*, 2,3.

he specifically sees as applicable transculturally throughout the Islamic world:

‘correct knowledge and behaviour in the total process by which a person is educated, guided and formed into a good Muslim- *adab* as the foundation of the soul or personality of the human being as a whole.’⁴⁰⁵

In earlier formulations, it could refer more to correct behaviour as a perpetuation of the standards maintained by the ancestors, as it was amongst the Pre-Islamic Arabs or its connotation could be more linked to aristocratic refinement as it did in the Abbasid era and under Sassanian Persian influence, a process that lead to further codification of an *adab* which had previously, generally, been quite fluid in formulation.⁴⁰⁶

On this basis, a number of schools of *adab* have developed in Islamic culture. Perhaps the most well-known and still cultivated is that of the Sufi lodges.⁴⁰⁷ In another context, one finds the ‘*adab* literature’ produced by many Islamic societies. These are Arabic (among other) works of literature on the role and behaviour of a judge (*adab a-qadi*), muftis, for example (*adab al-mufti*) or, the *adab* for other social roles. In the Ottoman and South Asian contexts, for example, there emerged a genre of *adab* literature to teach women ‘correct’ behaviour,⁴⁰⁸ a theme which is, of course, now of great interest to gender theorists. From the development of *adab* as a literary genre, the term has evolved, in modern Arabic, to refer to all *belles-lettres* and literary works. Finally and most

⁴⁰⁵ I. LAPIDUS: ‘Knowledge, Virtue and Action: The Classical Muslim Conception of *Adab* and the Nature of Religious Fulfillment in Islam’, in METCALF: *Moral Conduct and Authority*, 39.

⁴⁰⁶ LAPIDUS: ‘Knowledge, Virtue and Action’, 38-39 and G. Von GRÜNEBAUM: *Medieval Islam: A Study in Cultural Orientation* (Chicago 1971) 254-255.

⁴⁰⁷ R. LIFCHEZ: *The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey* (Berkeley 1992) 215-216. This gives a glimpse into *adab* as practiced in a Naqshbandi dervish lodge in the Ottoman era, a typical location in which *adab*-based behavior would be especially cultivated, to a higher degree than among the general populace.

⁴⁰⁸ B. METCALF (trans.): *Perfecting Women: Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi's Bihishti Zewar* (Berkeley 1992).

narrowly, it tends to now be used to refer to literature as a discipline in the academy.⁴⁰⁹ As pointed out by Grünebaum in his significant text. 'Medieval Islam: A Study in Cultural Orientation', *adab* 'never was rigorously defined'.⁴¹⁰ However, this chapter works on the basis of a ratification of the above definitions and contextualisations, while simplifying the working definition of *adab* to: *A way of being aimed at ethics and refinement, which in turn cultivate a discernment of right practical behaviour and living.*⁴¹¹ For the purpose of an examination of its ritual and inter-religious properties, we will particularly look at this discernment of correct behaviour as a form of *savoir-faire* in dilemma settings, particularly ritual and sharing environments.

Adab is Arab and Pre-Islamic in origin⁴¹² The core values within and approaches to a good practice of *adab* are, however, said to be based on the example of the Prophet Muhammed's life, known as the *Sunnah* (tradition/precedent).⁴¹³ A value on hospitality, which is an example of *adabpar excellence*, is prominently found in the literature and narratives of pre-Islamic Arabia. Jacques Derrida, a philosopher of hospitality, has drawn on the example of Hatim at-Tai, the ideal knight and *adib* (person with *adab*) in *adab* literature; He was a man said to be capable of rising from the dead in order to provide hospitality and remained into the Islamic era as an example of virtue.⁴¹⁴ So, although there is a great deal said about hospitality and *adab* in Islamic literature, it is already an embedded discourse that need not be explained, as such, because it existed in the pre-Islamic era. This is the same for the Bible, within which hospitality is already present as part of the epistemic values of the text. The story of Abraham and his guests

⁴⁰⁹ J.CAMPO (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Islam*, s.v. 'adab' (New York 2009) 11.

⁴¹⁰ G. Van GRÜNEBAUM: *Medieval Islam*, 250.

⁴¹¹ The *Brill* Encyclopaedia of Islam defines it as: 'the noble and humane tendency of the character and its manifestation in the conduct of life and social intercourse', H.A.R. GIBB (et al. eds): *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, J. PEDERSEN: s.v. 'adab', .

⁴¹² G. BOWERING: 'The Adab Literature of Classical Sufism' in METCALF: *Moral Conduct and Authority*, 64.

⁴¹³ BOWERING: 'The Adab Literature', 64.

⁴¹⁴ DERRIDA, *Acts of Religion*, quoting GIBB: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 274.

does not include an appendix explaining hospitality to the reader. As we will see in the explanations of Kazemi, the main text for understanding *adab* in Muslim societies is the Koran and the main exemplar, in Islamic tradition, is the Prophet Muhammed, upon whom, traditionally, all Muslims desire to model their behaviour, sometimes down even to the smallest details. The Koran provides counsel on *adab* in a number of places, such as in the Surah of the Inner Apartments:

‘Oh those who have believed! Put not yourselves forward in advance of God and his Messengers; be God fearing of God. Truly God is Hearing, Knowing. Oh those who have believed! Exalt not your voices above the voice of the Prophet nor openly publish a saying to him as you would openly publish others...’ (Surah of the Inner Apartment 49:1-2)⁴¹⁵

This is only one of a number of verses in which direct revelation is given about the nuances and shades of ideal human behaviour, such as, in the Surah of the Spider, which describes a principle of *adab* in dealing with non-Muslims, ‘Dispute not with the people of the book, except in a way that is fairer...’⁴¹⁶ (verse 46) and, more generally: ‘God loves not the open publishing of evil sayings except by him who has been wronged...’ (Surah of the Women, Verse 149).⁴¹⁷

Adab is comprehensive in the sense that it is a way of being addressing all aspects of life and is further refined in *adab*-literature that is written for particular social groups.⁴¹⁸ It is often stated in common media discourse around comparative religion (Muslim and Non-Muslim sources alike) that Islam is a holistic and comprehensive religion, ‘a way of life’, as it is often dubbed. And indeed, many sources of *adab*, such as *adab* literature, hadith

⁴¹⁵ BAKHTIAR: *The Sublime Quran*, 599.

⁴¹⁶ BAKHTIAR: *The Sublime Quran*, 464.

⁴¹⁷ BAKHTIAR: *The Sublime Quran*, 115. Other translations give a variety of interpretations such as ‘the public stating of wrongs’ rather than ‘publishing’ which is a somewhat awkward translation, in English, because publication is generally associated with the printed rather than spoken word.

⁴¹⁸ METCALF: *Moral Conduct and Authority*, 4.

etc...do emphasise that *adab*, as all right behaviour, is all-encompassing. How, after all, would there be a moment in which correctly-discerned behaviour would not be relevant? The reference that Metcalf and others make to *adab* literature indicates this by drawing attention to the very detailed nature of these writings that cover, like literature regarding the *Sunnah*, sometimes quite minute details. We will see, however, that *adab* is also intended to be more profound and more deeply inculcated within the self than legalistic pronouncements or minutely detailed protocol. *Adab* is not so much the literature that describes it, but a lifestyle and attitude.

Adab is, however, a notion of right behaviour that does encompass a variety of ideals such as etiquette, refinement, consideration and in its inverse, saying that one 'lacks *adab*' is a clear criticism of uncouth behaviour in many Muslim societies.⁴¹⁹ In simple terms, *adab* is an element of personal character including, but not limited to etiquette. It is precisely the ambient discursive nature of *adab* that makes it difficult to pinpoint. I have heard it remarked, for example, at the House of the Virgin Mary, that a particular man using his cell phone loudly just outside the shrine had 'bad *adab*'. This is not a point of etiquette in a literary work nor is there an example, obviously, from the Prophet Muhammed's time on how to speak on a cell phone, although the exhortation to speak softly is found in Islamic literature, as in the koranic quote previously mentioned. It would be ridiculous, however, to try to attribute the behaviours of others to religious literature or to overly exoticise the behaviours of people of other religious traditions and cultures, a danger into which many have fallen.⁴²⁰ Instead, I would put forward, that notions of *adab*, somewhat parallel to the Western sense of etiquette but more comprehensively

⁴¹⁹ METCALF: *Moral Conduct and Authority*, 3. See also FARAG: *Private Lives, Public Affairs*, 100. Farag states, on page 100, that, 'at the beginning of the 21st century, the faculty of literature is the *kuliyat al adab*, the morality police are the *bulis al adab*, and a rude person is considered *qulil al adab*'.

⁴²⁰ See the vast field of literature in the later part of the 20th century on the colonial roots of Anthropology and the unavoidable discussion begun by Edward Said's text 'Orientalism'.

humanistic, are simply ambient and influential in the way many in majority Muslim societies approach ideal behaviour, whether formally articulated or not.

The Other and Fluctuations in Defining *Adab*

Adab is potentially cosmopolitan in the sense that it can saturate a culture that is multireligious and multicultural, affecting both Muslims and Non-Muslims, as in the *millet* system of the Ottoman Empire. In fact, *adab* literature that details correct behaviour for Muslims has been particularly important in places and times in which Muslims were a minority, especially when they were a ruling minority.⁴²¹ *Adab* cannot be extracted from the context of multi-religious encounters that all Muslim societies have passed through at one point or another, such as the Turkish assimilation of and encounter with Byzantine civilisation and the encounter between Islam and the Hindu, Persian and Central Asian ways of living that produced the culture of the Moghul Empire.⁴²²

In moments of tension around the definition of Muslimness, *adab* (parallel and overlapping with religious law) has become more codified by necessity. This is the case of the early Muslim community in upheaval and experiencing influences from outside traditions, as alluded to in the past point.⁴²³ As Bowering, in the same volume edited by Metcalf, explains, Islamic culture is a product of a number of influences including a refining of Arab and Bedouin custom that then came into contact with foreign and Non-Muslim peoples. These next layers of influence refined Islamic culture and discourse further, giving added nuance to what it meant, for example, to follow the prophetic imperative of human equality before God as a lived *adab*, while at the same time taking on Persian concepts of hierarchy and monarchy.⁴²⁴ These tensions have created the circumstances for a discussion of *adab* in Muslim communities

⁴²¹ METCALF: *Moral Conduct and Authority*, 12.

⁴²² METCALF: *Moral Conduct and Authority*, 13.

⁴²³ BOWERING: 'The Adab Literature of Classical Sufism', in METCALF, *Moral Conduct and Authority*, 62.

⁴²⁴ METCALF: *Moral Conduct and Authority*, 13.

in order to clarify what it is (see Ensels in Chapter Four re: the resolution of *aql*, *nafs*, etc...) in each new setting. Metcalf uses the specific South Asian context to have a look at the wider world of *adab* as a general Muslim phenomenon because it is a key example, having wrestled with developing refined codes of *adab* in reaction to both Hindu and British norms for some time. The focus on Indian Muslims, in conjunction with classical intercultural *adab* issues, because the South Asian pronounced emphasis on the topic is also illustrative of the principals of *adab* generally. Similarly, Sufi codes of *adab* are illustrative for their high concentration on etiquette as a form of *adab* within the training ground of the dervish lodge, although they reflect an *adab* that is found to some degree throughout greater Islamic culture in a less concentrated form. In neither case is a culturally or subculturally limited focus intended to be derived from their exemplary employment in this text. Rather, the more concentrated instances are helpful in examining the more general settings in which these values have been diffused.

A Muslim's sense of *adab* need not contradict local or Non-Muslim custom and codes of *adab* may even use an Islamic rationale for the same customs that exist amongst Non-Muslims in the same geographic and cultural zone.⁴²⁵ Again, here we see the sub-theme that *adab* is linked to not only discernment of correct behaviour on a personal level but also the encounter with the Non-Muslim other, where it may be in agreement with previously established norms in some cases, or may tend to be constructed as such in a new environment.

Some liminal spaces or communities seem to be located outside the norms of *adab* and such places and communities often have their own separate and distinct notions of correct behaviour and *mode de vivre*. These liminal communities operate in liminal spaces and maintain their own distinct *adab*. For example, in a subculture like that of the *malangs* in the subcontinent, normative rules are reinterpreted and changed within a community.⁴²⁶ This is an extreme version of an antinomian atmosphere where many

⁴²⁵ METCALF: *Moral Conduct and Authority*, 13.

⁴²⁶ K. EWING: 'Malangs of the Punjab: Intoxication or *Adab* as the Path to God', in METCALF: *Moral Conduct and Authority*, ch.15.

otherwise accepted social norms are subverted. To a lesser degree, an understanding of these variations in *adab* can give us some insight into the liminal, inbetween-ness of a shared pilgrimage site where *adab* can be more flexible than in other circumstances. *Adab* is not uniform in all places or among all people. An antinomian Qalandar tradition, not unlike that of the *malangs* still found in modern South Asia, was in existence in the Ottoman Empire also.⁴²⁷

When *adab* is fully absorbed it becomes a form of appropriate action and being that, eventually, requires no thought. It is automatic. This is the sense of *adab* that one has in these places of worship. It is often less scripted and more a part of the unconscious repertoire of the Muslim and Non-Muslim cultures that are coinciding. As Hayden says, it is generally the case that this stays in place until there is a rupture in the power system within which the sacred place is located.⁴²⁸

What I believe much of the information above points to is the fact that the concept of *adab*, whether overt or simply an ambient influence, is highly useful in examining ritual, hospitality, pilgrimage and even tourism at shared sacred sites in Turkey and elsewhere, although it cannot easily be crystallised into one form. Foundationally, it's part of Islamic and Islamically-influenced culture as an ideal and concept. Further, it is very key to understand *adab* as something that has often been most refined and discussed when dealing with the Non-Muslim world, correct behaviour with the other and the limits of what can be absorbed from the Non-Muslim surrounding culture. As such, the shared sacred place is not only an apropos place for the outplaying of *adab* because of the relevance of religion and traditional cultural values that may suddenly reassert themselves (wearing modest clothes, for example) but also because *adab* has often been tied in

⁴²⁷ H. WATENPAUGH: 'Deviant Dervishes: Space, Gender and the Construction of Antinomian Piety in Ottoman Aleppo', in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37 (2005) 535–565.

⁴²⁸ HAYDEN: 'Antagonistic Tolerance'. I hasten to add that while I am using some helpful concepts from Hayden, in my overall viewpoint I lean more towards the observations of Glen Bowman of the University of Kent, Couroucli and Albera of Paris X, Nanterres/L'Ecole Française d'Athènes and Aix-en-Provence universities, respectively.

with negotiations of space, ritual and general behavioural guidelines as they pertain to right behaviour with those whose social norms may be different. One need only think of Zeynep who would not enter the House of the Virgin because of being improperly covered, despite her articulated non-religiousness. Her respect for the value of the other being also seen in the formal instruction in the etiquette of a spatial practicing of Islamic prayer-forms in a way that did not intrude on Christian space is a classic example of *adab*-discernment forged in the crucible of her family's experience going between the Muslim and Non-Muslim worlds on both sides of the Aegean.

B. Adab in Turkey in Historical Perspective

Specific to the Ottoman and Turkish contexts where much of this project's gaze falls, it is important that *adab* as a cultivation of refined behaviour was very much associated with high culture in Ottoman Turkey and had a distinct Persianate influence, as it did in many other parts of the Islamic world.⁴²⁹ Importantly, when the process of reforming the Ottoman Empire began (the Tanzimat reforms that will be mentioned again later) there was an increased reliance on *adab* (Turkish: *Edep*) as a cultural matrix that was larger and more inclusive of Ottoman Turkish culture as a whole than simply the specifics of clerical and law-based religious Islam. As such, it was drawn upon (at an elite level, chiefly) in order to maintain an order that was culturally Ottoman and Turkish, while yet not being a structure in the service of the ulema's (cleric's) agenda, who were no longer to guide the legal system along the lines of *sharia* as the Ottoman Empire was being reformed and modernised. This was already beginning many years before Atatürk.⁴³⁰ This, however, was not seen to conflict with Islam (Islam certainly was considered a fountain of *adab*) so much as being 'courtly' (thus useful for elites) and also connected to the scholarly/scrival class (*adab* as *belles lettres*). As such, it was a

⁴²⁹ A. SALVATORE: 'The Reform Project in the Emerging Public Spheres', in M. MASUD, A. SALVATORE, M. BRUINEN: *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates* (Edinburgh 2009) 198.

⁴³⁰ SALVATORE: 'The Reform Project', 198.

discourse that could be managed by non-clerics and employed widely, to such an extent that (as we will see when examining identity further on) that the refinement of the 'Ottoman gentleman' became an ideal amongst Non-Muslims in the empire.

Adab as 'correct behaviour' (rather than aristocratic culture) is more important and relevant across different levels of class structure and more relevant cross-culturally and cross-religiously, as it is found in a variety of Muslim cultures and is an influence in the behaviours of Non-Muslims with an Islamicate cultural background.⁴³¹ It is therefore more relevant to a study of shared pilgrimage, a form of ritual acting which, as previously noted by Couroucli, is generally found at the margins, rather than centres of Turkish life, now and in the Ottoman Period. Further, it is often amongst working class traditional people that one finds a great deal of traditional *adab* preserved. So it must be seen more widely than aristocratic culture, as well. I have found traditional gestures of *adab* such as placing the hand on the heart as a form of silent acknowledgement and greeting in places where traditional high culture is maintained in Turkey, such as a workshop for Turkish marbling, known as *ebru* on the Asian side of Istanbul. At the same time, if we look at the subject through the gestures of another socio-economic group, one can see working and middle class Alevis making gestures drawing on traditional Turkish *adab* to show greeting and respect (kissing one's own hand) in the House of the Virgin Mary. These forms of etiquette are the most relevant and can be found across class distinction and across international borders amongst the many Islamicate cultures that host shared pilgrimage sites. Nearly identical gestures exist within the common repertoire of Lebanese Muslims and Christians, for example, as I have witnessed.

What is most significant here in the particularly Turkish *adab*-context is that when in need of a guiding discourse, the governing power of the Ottoman Empire needed to develop 'invented tradition' (*sensu* Hobsbawm) that was not wholly innovative or unfamiliar.⁴³² That is, it could be reshaped and reused for the purposes of developing new ideas but it must draw on the 'venerable past' and

⁴³¹ R. CANFIELD: *Turko-Persia in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge 1991).

⁴³² E. HOBSBAWM and T. RANGER: *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge 1983) and SALVATORE: 'The Reform Project', 200.

traditions already present in Turkey. What this indicates is the fact that *adab* could be used as a notion to rule because it was accepted by the majority of the population. It was *de facto* an accepted norm for behaviour for many to act in accordance with *adab* as an often nebulous yet simultaneously, at times, very concrete principal regulating the body. This underscores the point that *adab* is a) present at different social strata, even if often associated with high culture and b) a widely accepted basis for behaviour, although said to be in decline within more Westernised societies, such as Turkey⁴³³. In the same way that it could be appealed to in such a wide sense, it can also here be analysed as a similarly large discourse in a variety of settings. It is a background discourse and episteme. Further, it is present in some form throughout the Islamic world. I therefore include examples not only from Turkey or from elite sources but also from a number of places where *adab* has been highlighted amongst a variety of communities, keeping in mind that at its most basic levels, the principals of *adab* are near-universal regardless of context, throughout Islamic and Islamicate culture. We will proceed by using an example from North Africa in order to concentrate on the more pan-Islamic aspect of *adab*.

C. Adab and Ritual Dilemma Scenarios

When earlier relating the issues that had appeared in the field regarding appropriate behaviour as understood by respondents who were Muslims with some history of shared pilgrimage in Chapter 3, we examined a narration regarding *adab* as a balanced discernment, holding in tension the natural instincts (*nafs*) intellect (*aql*) and established norms (*qaida*) from the work of Remco Ensel on Moroccan village life.⁴³⁴ I completed this with a Turkish example in which a Sheikh in Istanbul instructed me to break a basic rule of *adab* (pointing the bottom of one's foot towards others) in order to work out the tension between the *qaida* and the particular circumstances

⁴³³ FARAG: *Private Lives, Public Affairs*, 101. Further, one of my interviewees, an ethnic Kurd with a leftist background, said he considered one of the major problems of post-reform Republican Turkey to be the inadvertent development of a culture without *adab*.

⁴³⁴ ENSEL: *Saints and Servants*, 181.

including the needs of the body of one from another society with a distinct sense of established norms (*qaida*).

This goes very much to the heart of our question regarding the hows of Muslim/Non-Muslim ritual and spatial negotiation that takes place in shared sacred space. The question of appropriate *adab* appears not only in Ephesus but in all structures of sacred precincts (the *temenos*, to borrow an ancient term) that host more than one self-identified community, each having its own distinct religious praxis. Besides the Muslim-Christian convergence in Ephesus, every example cited in the wider world of shared pilgrimage becomes, in some moment, a reconciliation of reason (*aql*), emotion/passion (*nafs*)⁴³⁵ and socially established norms (*qaida*). The spaces have been designed and conceived on the basis of the perceptual space of one, both or all communities converging on it. They have, over time, been practiced spaces in which a practical negotiation of this *adab*-discernment (as described by Ensel) has both fluctuated and found stasis.

Further affirming this, Metcalf states, regarding the themes in the collection she has edited:

‘Several of the papers describe a theory that humans possess two important faculties: ‘*aql*, the faculty of moral discrimination shared with the angels, on the one hand, and *nafs*, the self in the sense of the will or, more typically, wilful principle, on the other. Both, generally speaking, are expected to coexist. Man’s realization comes through the cultivation of ‘*aql* and the consequent disciplining of the *nafs*.’⁴³⁶

She further states, in accord with Ensel, that the tension between these two elements of the self, which are negotiated through *adab*, are existential keys, ‘It is the very tension, the process of discrimination, the fact that there are choices to be made

⁴³⁵ In the context of most shared pilgrimage places (with certain exceptions) it would seem exaggerated to speak of passion, emotion etc...Perhaps in this case it is best filed under ‘desire’, the desire to participate in a rite or a ritual space, while maintaining an intellectual choice, respecting the agreed norms of the space.

⁴³⁶ METCALF: *Moral Conduct and Authority*, 10.

and control to be exercised, that gives man's(sic) life its value.'⁴³⁷ As Ensel says, 'Life consists of acting out this double bind. The ideal aim in life is to maintain a just equilibrium of reason and passion in one's life.'⁴³⁸ The tension is in factors such as maintaining poise while yet showing emotion in a way that is fair to one's psyche while not impinging on others and not losing all self-control. These are being described as necessary and fundamental tensions of existential reality.

In ritual circumstances, we have such issues as whether Muslim pilgrims may conduct their ritual prayer in the precincts of a church with answers as diverse as that given by Zeynep (any act of devotion by a Muslim should be outside) to that of Halil (the rules fluctuate according to whoever is in charge of the House of the Virgin Mary but in the past there was the second room in which Muslims would pray and were given a copy of the Koran by the monks and nuns). Halil further presents a similar but smaller-scale *adab*-dilemma when he describes Christians and other Non-Muslims who would pass from the Roman Catholic chapel through the Muslim prayer space on their way out. When confronted with both the fact that they were leaving a church and were passing through a space that was temporarily transformed into an Islamic prayer-space, many chose to take off their shoes while walking behind the Muslim pilgrims. In that sense, the Non-Muslim pilgrims were themselves engaging in *adab*-discernment. That this negotiative element is central to the intuitive (rather than rubric-based) form of *adab* is illustrated, additionally, in a ritual space dilemma tale from the earliest and most authoritative Islamic texts.

D. Adab in a General Islamic Context: the Sunnah and Interfaith Spaces

The subject of sharing sacred space is touched upon, some may be surprised to find out, in the life of the Prophet Muhammed himself, as pointed out in the work of Reza Shah Kazemi, an Iranian Muslim scholar, currently resident at the Ismaili Institute in

⁴³⁷ METCALF: *Moral Conduct and Authority*, 10.

⁴³⁸ ENSEL: *Saints and Servants*, 181.

London. Kazemi makes the argument, from traditional Islamic sources (although with caution on the historicity of some) that there is an epistemic notion within Islam that, despite differences on the plane of dogma, treats the field of sacred space in more universal terms. He claims that this is because sacredness is defined dogmatically but is not thus confined in his article, 'Defining Without Confining: Reflections of a Prophetic Usage of Sacred Space',⁴³⁹ in which he states:

'...in traditional Islamic consciousness, to *define* the space of the sacred (the mosque, the *qibla* etc.) is not to *confine* the sacred (wherever ye turn there is the face of God), and thus that the space of the sacred cannot be subject to what we might call 'religious nationalism'.

Before I share his thoughts and elaborate on my own position, I must include an extremely important caveat: *the on the ground reality in Muslim societies, like all societies, does not always reflect this discourse of tolerance and counter-discourses of intolerance also exist based on the same kinds of scriptural sources. The reason I choose here to examine the more tolerant line within Islamic thought is because it is especially relevant to our subject matter, not because I am making the claim to a vast and over-reaching narrative that blankets all Islamic societies as religiously tolerant. This is far too close to the binary oppositional oscillation which schizophrenically (often in Western mass media) argues whether Islam is 'tolerant' or not, an overly simplistic discussion at best. Here, instead, we are looking at an important strain of thought as one among many, but with an interestingly authoritative narrative that is illuminative.*

The two cases here cited are illustrative of a particular *adab* that comes out of recognition of both the particularities of religious dogma and yet a universalisation of the sacred as occupying a space that, regardless of acknowledged differences, still has a relevance. Of the topics he discusses, mention of the Prophet's *adab* in the reception of

⁴³⁹ R.SHAH-KAZEMI: 'Defining Without Confining: reflections on a prophetic use of sacred space', in *Interreligious Insight*, July 2005 Edition, <http://www.interreligiousinsight.org/July2005/July05Shah-Kazemi.pdf> accessed online, July 2009, 2.

the priests from Najran and the (alleged)⁴⁴⁰ letter of protection to St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai are significant.

According to the narration of Ibn Ishaq (and several other narrators considered reliable in Islamic tradition, according to Kazemi) the Prophet Muhammed received a delegation of Eastern Orthodox clerics who had come from Najran in Yemen to debate with him on the divinity vs. humanity of Jesus. What is most interesting about this story from the *sirah* (prophetic biography) literature of Islam is not the fact that the debate took place but that afterwards, the priests asked permission of the Prophet *to celebrate a liturgy in his mosque, a ritual affirming many of the main doctrines that stand in contradiction to the Koranic viewpoint, as had just been put forward in the debate, no less*. The Prophet answered the request in the affirmative, over the obvious objections of his followers. Kazemi says about this incident that, 'One observes here a perfect example of how disagreement on the plane of dogma can co-exist with a deep respect on the superior plane of religious devotion.'⁴⁴¹

He further cites an incident (less agreed upon by Islamic scholars) in which the Prophet prevents an image of the Madonna and child from being destroyed when the early Muslims are destroying the images of the pantheon of deities once found in the Kaaba.⁴⁴² In a further act of protection, there is also the very famous letter of the Prophet to the monks of St.

⁴⁴⁰ I include material here with the caveat of potential ahistoricity because, regardless of issues around authorship, the texts represent some strain of Islamic tradition accepted by many communities. At the very least, the acceptance of these documents suggests that they make up a lineage of tradition, a lens through which Muslim communities have seen their prophet's character. This is in itself significant for the study of religion and anthropology etc...

⁴⁴¹ R.SHAH-KAZEMI: 'Defining Without Confining',
<http://www.interreligiousinsight.org/July2005/July05Shah-Kazemi.pdf>, 1.

⁴⁴² R.SHAH-KAZEMI: 'Defining Without Confining',
<http://www.interreligiousinsight.org/July2005/July05Shah-Kazemi.pdf>, 1.
 Of course, this also raises further questions on the limits of *adab* and hospitality, as this was an act that did not host hospitably the religion of the other, but made an exception in the case of an image representing a monotheistic tradition. Religious law may trump what would seem socially acceptable *adab* in some cases, it stands to reason.

Catherine's in which he states that he will be, '...watching over them as their protector, with all my soul, together with all my umma; because they (the monk and hermits) are a part of my own people and part of those protected by me...' ⁴⁴³ While such values have had their challenges in practical application (just as secular values of tolerance are highly contested and problematic in the modern multi-religious West) they do indeed create an important template through which we can view the phenomenon and phenomena of shared pilgrimage, an *adab* of overlapping sacred places. While no one cannot affirm or deny the existence of the mentioned icon (the Kaaba has burned and been rebuilt since then) it is true that St. Catherine's monastery in the Sinai is multi-religious in following and has within it a mosque built by the monks, mainly ⁴⁴⁴ for the benefit of the Bedouins who protect the monastery.

E. Adab as Lived in Multi-Religious Modern Turkey and Mutual Conformity

To apply this knowledge to a closer field of contextualisation, I will further draw briefly on some examples given by Maria Couroucli, an anthropologist of Paris Nanterre University. Couroucli in her work, previously mentioned, along with Dionigi Albera and the other contributors to the volume 'Religions Traversées' consistently mention questions of *adab* in modern Turkish shared pilgrimage places, in a number of ways. She makes a few important points, which partly have already explored and therefore will here be only invoked. We have already seen, for example, that boundaries are important and this does indeed form an important element of *adab* and etiquette in the multi-religious or shared ritual site, when determining spatial practice and the very physical construction by those who 'represent space' in Lefebveren terms.

⁴⁴³ R.SHAH-KAZEMI: 'Defining Without Confining'
<http://www.interreligiousinsight.org/July2005/July05Shah-Kazemi.pdf>, 2.

⁴⁴⁴ C. WALSH: *The Cult of Saint Katherine of Alexandria in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot 2007) 42-43.

As a key example, Couroucli mentions that Muslim and Eastern Orthodox clergy keep a respectful distance from each other and do not conduct rituals at the same time or place at shared sites in Turkey, in the context of a paper delivered regarding the church of St. George on Buyukada, an Island that forms part of Istanbul. While these sorts of guidelines are understood by members of both religious communities, it is my sense that, on the part of the Muslim community, there is an influence within the grammar of devotion and the repertoire of behaviours that is influenced by *adab* discourses, particularly when there is a value placed on non-interference and nonappropriation, as I have seen appear in my fieldwork interviews. This is not to suggest that it is an explicit enough discourse for Turkish respondents to name it as such, although it has been invoked on rare occasion and by a Turkish professor who commented on the topic of this research as being ultimately one of *adab* between religious communities.

There is one practical observation that I have made in almost all co-ritualised spaces that I have visited and which has been confirmed by others, some of whom have visited the same spaces for ethnographic fieldwork: In peaceful shrines (which are not the only shared pilgrimage sites, of course) it seems that the ethos amongst both Muslims and Christians has been one of having a quiet and conforming presence in the sanctuary of the other, without any major compromise of belief, an attitude of self-regulation carried out individually through spatial practice and gestures that are deemed non-offensive by both communities.⁴⁴⁵ (Here widening out to other examples such as Muslim-Jewish sites in North Africa or Muslim-Hindu shrines in India might not be helpful because of the potential for differences in praxis through variables that are connected to the distinct epistemic and circumstantial differences appearing when these religious traditions are re-constellated in relation to the Muslim pilgrim). The classic example being that given in the work of Benoit Fliche

⁴⁴⁵ Here widening out to other examples such as Muslim-Jewish sites in North Africa or Muslim-Hindu ones in India might not be helpful because of the potential for differences in praxis through variables that are connected to the distinct epistemic and circumstantial differences appearing when these religious traditions are re-constellated in relation to the Muslim pilgrim.

(*Religions Traversées*) who mentions such things as the ambiguity of Muslims regarding gestures of crossing oneself at St. Antoine church (as I have also seen) and, in the same church, the ambiguity of the clergy in receiving votive gifts left in thanksgiving or in attempting to prevent Muslims from receiving communion⁴⁴⁶. As we see consistently, *adab* is a discernment-negotiation process on all sides that, ideally, honours the sensitivities of all concerned. While a Roman Catholic priest may appreciate the devotion of a Muslim pilgrim, the bringing of offerings such as chickens or lambs has proven difficult at times both practically and theologically.⁴⁴⁷ A Muslim pilgrim may want to join in ritually as far as possible but feel ambiguous about certain gestures commonly made in a space which, by its design, suggests a certain grammar of devotion linked to Christian orthodoxy, rather than the visitor's intention. So, a negotiation whereby both the pilgrim's devotion is honoured at the same time as the host's protocol is maintained becomes paramount to all parties in any given moment and any given space. As I have shown here, these dilemmas are not at all new.⁴⁴⁸

F. Adab and Romanticisations of Religious Tolerance

Increasingly, in many areas of anthropological and religious studies research, there is a concern that many religious traditions from outside European/Western sources have been overly romanticised. There is a similar danger in treating *adab* as a sort of idealised practice that can sooth all differences, particularly religious ones. When *adab* becomes synonymous with normative behaviour (as it easily can, when subtlety is lost) it can also enshrine behaviours that simply uphold the status quo and keep particular communities in a subordinate position. Such is the case

⁴⁴⁶ B. FLICHE: 'Musulmans et Sanctuaires Chrétiens', 161.

⁴⁴⁷ D. ALBERA. and B. FLICHE: 'Les pratiques des musulmans dans les sanctuaires chrétiens: le cas d'Istanbul', in D. ALBERA and M. COUROUCLI (eds.): *Religions Traversées*, 163.

⁴⁴⁸ S. BASHEAR: 'Qibla Musharriqa and Early Muslim Prayer in Churches', in *The Muslim World*, 81:3-4 (1991).

with some aspects of etiquette that developed in Islamic religious behavioural codes that, often based on the 'Pact of Umar', encouraged practices of segregation and the subordination of non-Muslims. It is a classic issue of *adab* to examine when a person should stand up in honour of another and who should greet whom first, for example.⁴⁴⁹ As a result of the Pact of Umar⁴⁵⁰ and other similar influences, it was at times the norm that the *adab* for a non-Muslim was to stand when a Muslim entered the room and to walk on left side of the street, the less favourable side. In this case, the negotiation of hierarchy and appropriate behaviour lead to a form of etiquette that many in contemporary society (including many Muslims) would find strange and discriminatory. *Adab* is not a product of an era or culture in which religious egalitarianism was necessarily always an ideal. Of course, one could question whether it ever really is, but this is a different subject. It should almost go without saying, here, that almost all concepts offered for contextualising purposes have aspects that are less than ideal and which must be protected from romanticisation. However, in this case, we are not focusing on this more troubling side of *adab* for the simple reason that it does not currently play a large role in any particular shared pilgrimage site that I have studied.

Conclusion

The influence of *adab* as a discourse-streaminevitably appears in shared pilgrimage, although it is an *adab* of an unofficial and only rarely articulated sort. For that reason, it requires deep context to be better understood and detected. Having explored some of the

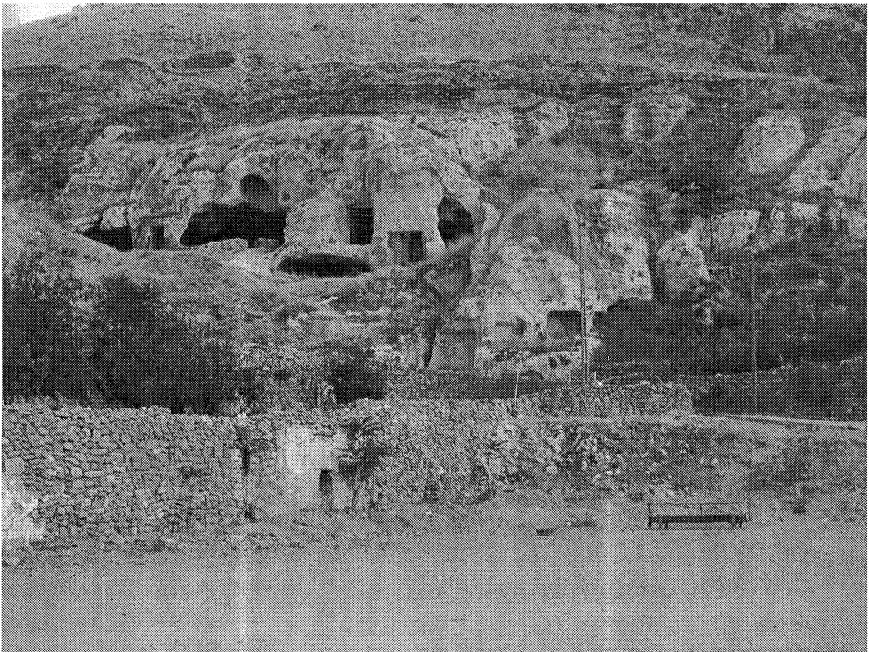
⁴⁴⁹ M. BUKHARI and A. HAMID (trans.): *Moral teachings of Islam: Prophetic Traditions from Adab al-Mufrad* (Walnut Creek 2003) 96, 99-103.

⁴⁵⁰ W. VEENHOVEN: *Case Studies on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: A World Survey*, Volume 4 (The Hague 1976) 82. The Pact of Umar contained a number of rules regarding distinctive clothing for Non-Muslims, the regulation of public displays of ritual and the paying of a tribute tax. There is debate about the historicity of the text's attribution to Umar, an early follower of the Prophet Muhammed and its implementation is a point of controversy and negative feelings between Muslims and Non-Muslims in the Islamic world.

religious and social aspects of formulating right behaviour in a Muslim setting, it becomes easier to see its presence in informal religiosity, particularly as the outworking of tensions and the accommodation of the ritual acts and space of the other. This, then, is something of the further contextualisation with which we can come to the table of encounter, one held up by such notions as hospitality, etiquette/*adab* and communal relationship. Before moving on to the relational aspect of shared pilgrimage, it has been necessary to have some sense of this discourse and even spatial practice that underpins relationship. Here we have emphasised the textual, intellectual, historical and theological aspects of *adab*, the frame within which negotiation of space takes place. Clearly, although there is no fixed way in which a Muslim in a Syrian monastery or a Christian in a Muslim *mazar* should behave, there is a general sense of appropriate behaviour beyond the basic structures of religious and secular law (sometimes subverting it), which exists and is influential in spatial practice, particularly in more traditional spaces, a framework informing both the formal and spontaneous elements. At times *adab* has become an oppressive principal, and thus must not be idealised or romanticised. Rather, it should be seen as a force, one force amongst many that can culturally and religiously inform Muslim pilgrims at mixed shrines. All of this leaves something of a vacuum however, in looking at what has already been put forward as the instrument of analysis, namely the focus on lived and practiced religion as grounded spatial practice. To further refine this in a more practical direction, the next step brings us to the issue of relationship as the encounter of communities and individuals who engage in the practicing of space at shared pilgrimage sites.

Chapter 7

Relationship as Background to Ritual Sharing



*'Peace, it turns out, is just as multi-causal as conflict...'*⁴⁵¹

'Both 'politics' and 'ethics' go back to Greek words that signify place: polis and ēthea, 'city-state' and 'habitats,' respectively. The very word 'society' stems from socius, signifying sharing and

⁴⁵¹ A. BIGELOW: 'Saved By the Saint: Refusing and Reversing Partition in Muslim North India', in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 68:2 (2009) 1.

*sharing is done in a common place. More than the history of words is at issue here; Almost every major ethical and political thinker of the century has been concerned, directly or indirectly, with the question of community. As Victor Turner has emphasized, communitas is not just a matter of binding people together but of bonding together through rituals that actively communalise people- and that require particular places in which to be enacted.*⁴⁵²

What has become increasingly clear, while working with pilgrims and within communities surrounding shared sacred spaces, is that the theme of the communal relationships backgrounding shared pilgrimage (from both an idealistic and critical angle) cannot be skipped over and must be contextualised via history, observation of the field and analysis. This background makes some sense of the forms of relationship that develop in and around co-ritualised spaces and illuminates further the processual analysis earlier offered on the theme of varieties of sharing styles from the most antagonistic to the most overtly peaceful. In the following chapters, I have chosen to work with themes that, building on the basic key concepts earlier elucidated for a foundational understanding, are found to manifest in every instance of shared pilgrimage that I have examined. In some way, every theme appears in every location and, thus, is in a central and core positioning within the subject of this research undertaking. Each theme can be found embedded within the other, as in an abstract but elaborate pattern of Islamic art.⁴⁵³ These ideas are highly interdependent: *Adab* is an issue in relationship, fluidity between secular and religious forms (tourism vs. pilgrimage and the shades in between, as seen in the next section) is a key in understanding the form that *adab* takes as it works out the tensions between actors converging on shared space. Of these keys, relationship is so very central because without it there is no shared pilgrimage. Relationship is also so key to pilgrimage (shared or not) that a

⁴⁵² CASEY: *The Fate of Place*, xiv and V. TURNER: *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago 1969) chs. 3 and 4.

⁴⁵³ L. JONES: *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture: Experience, Interpretation, Comparison*, Volume 2 (Cambridge 2000) 224.

narrative like that found in *Canterbury Tales*, a pivotal text for the development of both English literature and the imagining of pilgrimage, revolves almost entirely around the discussions among those who go on pilgrimage together, the oft mentioned *communitas* in the sense employed by Victor Turner. Here, illustrated both theoretically and with concrete examples, is an enquiry into the significant role played by relationship in the maintenance of sacred places that are shared by two or more religious and, even, secular traditions. With this in mind, I intend to begin with a background on Ephesus as a city that signifies relationship, along with other sacred sites in Turkey. Elaborating further on this, I will broaden out into several other themes, looking at relationships in shared pilgrimage in other locations in so far as they shed light on the Turkish case studies. First there will be an examination of relationships in aftermath of collective traumas, with a comparison to the Partition of India and the Punjabi town of Malerkotla as a counterpart to Istanbul, Ephesus and the Exchange of Populations. On this theme I will examine the role of nostalgia for an ideal past in these locations. From there, boundaries and the necessity of ritual compromise in the maintenance of such borders is in focus.

A. Ephesus in Relations Between Turkish Muslims and Others

Perhaps one of the encounters in the field that most shaped my understanding of the role of relationship in shared pilgrimage was that which I had with Metin, who I have previously mentioned, a man who grew up with a mother that engaged in mixed pilgrimage, while also respecting secular norms, in a family that while ethnically Turkish, had a deep cross-Aegean history of relationship between Greeks and Turks. Metin's personal connection to the majority non-Muslim, non-Turkish world of Greece is particularly interesting and dramatic. Metin's grandfather, being a fluent Greek speaker who had lived most of his life in Crete (married to another Turkish woman from Greece) had maintained close relationships with the Greeks of Izmir. In the year 1919 the Greek army invaded much of Western Turkey in response to the encouragement of the

Allies and remained there for over three years. When the Greek invasion was repelled by the forces of Atatürk, a panic grew amongst Anatolian Greeks who feared that they would be the subject of reprisals by Turks because of the violence of their fellow ethnic Greeks during the war. Most fled Turkey with some haste, after the withdrawal of Greek forces. Metin's relatives helped to finance the exit of some Greeks by arranging a deal whereby a Jewish jeweller would buy the home of their neighbours, paying in precious stones and jewellery. Taking these mobile assets, the former occupants fled.

In the panic, a number of harsh incidents inevitably took place. Metin's family found two Greek children at this time who had been lost in the process of their parents' migration to Greece. His family raised the children for several years and he says that the younger of the two ('Maria') did not recognise her parents when, after years of searching, they finally came back to Izmir to find their children, now several years older. The narrative continued for some time, as the son ('Nikos') returned to Turkey decades later, a grown man and significant member of the Greek military, to thank Metin's family for saving such children under such circumstances. Clearly, this narrative and family history has impacted Metin and his family on a number of levels and for more than one generation.

Metin is a particularly relevant character in this process of spatial analysis, in part, simply because of his significant backgrounding to the context of Izmir, Ephesus and Turkey's historical cultural hybridity generally. Metin saw my questions about the House of the Virgin and his mother's practice of Islamic and mixed pilgrimage as ritual *within a context* and this is precisely the issue here. One can (to continue with the device of concentric rings) always go into further and further contextualisation as a technique of emplacement: seeing the 'location' wherein acts 'take place', seeing the further field, the further space of their enactment and the more of this relevant contextualisation, the more subtle, nuanced and enriched, the analysis. Metin's story is a case in point: rather than remaining at an analysis of a view brief moments of gesture, of raw spatial practice, we widen to include the cultural, familial and historical context of respondents. In Metin's case we see that, among these

elements there is the central theme of historical relationships, the theme for further enquiry. As mentioned before, both Metin and another respondent named Emre, expressed similar views regarding a respect for the Non-Muslim shrine owners and were someone surprised at my questions. Interestingly, however, I did not know Metin's family history before the first part of my interview with him. On the day that we met, I had already made a preliminary visit to Meryem Ana and had been struck by the fact that, despite reading in older documents that there was a Koranic theme to the second room (called the 'L' room by many of the local guides, because it is the bottom of the 'L' shaped house, the other room being the Roman Catholic chapel) it seemed that now the room was entirely Christian in theme. In my reading on the subject by Hasluck and some work on South Asian shrines by Yoginder Sikand and Robert Hayden⁴⁵⁴, I had come to see how very central the issue of sanctuary transference has been. A shift in spatial practice as conceived by one group can be highly fraught. I had thought that Meryem Ana was an exception with this issue rarely if ever arising. This was not the case, as I was to find out. Additionally, I was to find the reaction of the Turkish Muslims that I met, to be surprising. Both Metin and Emre, among several others that I interviewed were particularly intrigued by the level of mixed religious practice still going on between Turks and Armenians at the 'Miracle Church' in Balat and more than one respondent during fieldwork immediately picked up their phone to call an Armenian friend when hearing about this aspect of my research. This in itself is illustrative on multiple levels because even at that very personal and immediate level, I was seeing the inseparability of the religious-communal from the personal. The connection happened right in front of my eyes, during the interview process.

What emerges here is an extremely intimate relationship between what we often perceive to be religious-ethnic institutions (such as the Church and the Muslim community) but which, effectively, often boil themselves down to communal and, at a more micro-level, even very personal relationships. This appeared consistently. In the case of Metin, the entire discussion

⁴⁵⁴ Y. SIKAND: *Sacred Spaces: Exploring Traditions of Shared Faith in India* (New Delhi 2003).

of his family's narrative appears in reaction to my questions about his family's relationship to Meryem Ana Evi. That the interview proceeded in that direction is very telling. There is, in fact, very little that is 'Greek' about the House of the Virgin, besides some traditions maintained by those who believe in the authenticity of the house, connecting it to a Turkish-speaking Orthodox population that once lived in the nearby town of Sirince (formerly Kirkindje). However, the topic of communal relationships appears in the context of shared pilgrimage inevitably.

The theological, the clerical and the communal are, of course, not possible to fully separate as seen in the example of Emre whose point of view was somewhat complimentary to the viewpoint of Metin, despite the fact that Emre's tone towards the Greeks was somewhat more serious and less reconciliatory. In both cases it was clear that the need to maintain positive relationships was very much at the core of the values involved in space-negotiation. However, in Emre's case, there was a clear link between a given ethno-religious community and its theological viewpoint. Much, however remains focused on the communal level of discourse. In order to bring out some of the nuance, it is of assistance to look at studies that have, similarly, looked at the role of communal and personal relationships in the settings of mixed pilgrimage, again, chiefly in some way connected with Muslim communities. In particular, we have the work of Glenn Bowman in Palestine and Anna Bigelow in India, complimented by the research of Ger Duizings in the former Yugoslavia, these three representing some of the most contested spaces at the historical borders of the Islamic world. Of these, I will concentrate mainly on Bigelow and the Indian parallels on the issue of displacement and ruptures in the shared history that underpins shared sanctuaries.

B. The Maintenance of Relationships in the Wake of Remembered Collective Trauma

Historical memory can be exceptionally long and extremely dangerous, carrying, as it does, the traumas and, potentially, the

associated vendettas of the past. What is particularly interesting is the way in which not only Metin, but others in a number of places where ethnic cleansing and forced migrations have taken place, have expressed nostalgia for a time of harmony. The United Nations has described the 20th century as a period that experienced a very great deal of traumatic population transfer, both legal and illegal, a situation that has required it, as an institution, to issue directives on the legality of the practice, with a particular focus on the exchange between Greece and Turkey and the circumstances of the Inter-War period.⁴⁵⁵ But, of course, the issue is much wider than Europe, particularly when one considers the even larger displacement of peoples occurring after World War II, during the partition of India. This is a fact similarly reflected in the work of the UN in preventing further conflict by drawing intellectually on the experiences of member states.⁴⁵⁶ It is generally claimed that India received some 5 Million Hindus from Pakistan and that Pakistan received 6 million Muslims from India after the subcontinent's partition.⁴⁵⁷ There is also the unavoidable narrative of Palestinian displacements and Middle-Eastern Jewish expulsions taking place during various periods of the conflict over Israel/Palestine.⁴⁵⁸ For the sake of getting a clearer picture on the role of relationships as I have perceived it in the field, I will look, very briefly at an example from an area outside of the Balkans/Anatolia that has experienced similarly vast changes and that maintains traditions of shared pilgrimage: the Indian Subcontinent. Here there appear to be interesting parallels and distinctions.

⁴⁵⁵ United Nations Council for Human Rights:
<http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/0/683f547c28ac785880256766004ecdef?OpenDocument> (accessed 12 September, 2010).

⁴⁵⁶ United Nations Office of the High Commission for Human Right:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/statements/No.1India23Feb2007.pdf>, (accessed 12 September, 2010) and B. METCALF and T. METCALF: *A Concise History of Modern India* (Cambridge 2006) chs. 7 and 8.

⁴⁵⁷ J. SCHECHTMAN: *Population Transfers in Asia* (New York 1949) quoted in K. DAVIS: 'India and Pakistan, the Demography of Partition', in *Pacific Affairs* 22:3 (1949) 259.

⁴⁵⁸ N. NAZZEL: *The Palestinian Exodus from Galilee* (Beirut 1978).

Malerkotla – A Point of Comparison

Anna Bigelow, professor of Philosophy and Religion at North Carolina State University, has done a study on a shrine with interesting similarities and distinctions vis-a-vis Ephesus and the shrines in Turkey which we have examined, not so much for its spatial practices (although that is also relevant) but particularly for the light it sheds on the place of relationships (from personal, to communal and beyond) two different worlds with not entirely dissimilar histories. Briefly, Malerkotla is the only majority Muslim city in the Indian Punjab, post-partition. Despite the severe sectarian violence that made the Punjab a particularly violent place during partition, no one died in Malerkotla, a fact that is attributed to the very popular *Pir* (Muslim holy man/saint/elder) Haider Sheikh, who founded the town and is profoundly revered by all three religious communities, Hindu, Sikh and, of course, Muslim. (There are purists in all three traditions who also object to the practice, as Bigelow notes. Even these however, sometimes see the communal harmony element as a positive development to the extent that they are not keen to publically criticize it⁴⁵⁹). Haider Sheikh was the founder of the city itself in 1454 and it is therefore easy to see that the narrative around him is pivotal to the identity of the place.⁴⁶⁰ Bigelow says that many Punjabis come to the place specifically to repudiate sectarianism:

‘One significant way in which this dargah functions for residents and devotees as a means to subvert the division imposed by partition is simply by providing an ongoing point of encounter among Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus...Sikh and Hindu visitors inevitably experience inter-religious encounters that they could avoid by attending one of the many dargahs elsewhere in the state that are managed nowadays by Hindus and Sikhs. Instead, not only do they verbally validate one another’s presence, but also they adopt each other’s’ ritual practices, attend the same spiritual gatherings, visit at the same time of

⁴⁵⁹ BIGELOW: *Saved By the Saint*, 437.

⁴⁶⁰ BIGELOW: *Saved By the Saint*, 435.

day, make the same offerings, consult the same ritual specialists, and in some cases become possessed by the same saint's spirit...Many devotees I interviewed asserted that their presence was motivated, in part, by a desire to repudiate such divisiveness.⁴⁶¹

I contend that, in much the same way that peaceful relationships are celebrated in Malerkotla, Ephesus and the other shared shrines in Anatolia are linked to narratives of coexistence, past, present and future, that are much greater than the physical places themselves, playing a role in a narrative of imagined and re-imagined community. In using this place, as we have done with other locations, as a clarifying example for understanding Turkish shrines and Meryem Ana, it is important to keep in mind one key similarity: a shared cultural context beyond the immediacy of the ritual space and beyond, even, clichéd notions of a shared past. Those who speak are embedded in similar forms of discourse, with local and communal variation, converging on the same places in a shared cultural and literal landscape. Bigelow says of Malerkotla, 'At Haider Shaikh's tomb, pilgrims partake in a non-sectarian Punjabi pietistic culture characterized by shared histories, aesthetics and moral values.'⁴⁶² Similarly, Couroucli comments about Istanbul (for Meryem Ana, we can substitute the greater Izmir region to make a similar point) that the non-Greek pilgrims are,

'..."cultural Muslims" belonging to the Muslim majority in Turkey. The typical pilgrims to the island are literate women from the middle classes of Istanbul brought up in the secular tradition of modern Turkey. The more recent migrants from the Anatolian towns and villages only go to mosques. It takes deep local knowledge and local connections before the Muslim pilgrim penetrates a Christian sacred place. Autochthonous inhabitants of the City, *those born and raised in Istanbul, either Muslim or Rum share local ways, among these the sacred map of*

⁴⁶¹ BIGELOW: *Saved By the Saint*, 440.

⁴⁶² BIGELOW: *Saved By the Saint*, 446.

Istanbul, which also contains many more smaller shared shrines.⁴⁶³ (emphasis added)

Couroucli then footnotes the fact that there is an entire itinerary of sanctuaries to be visited on particular days for particular purposes, which is known to locals. This is confirmed in quite some detail by an article from 2003 in the *Hurriyet* newspaper.⁴⁶⁴ In one case the emphasis is on a cultural common background, the other geographic, but the points are similar. In the Punjab there is a common culture, a local culture that is held by Punjabis, beyond religious difference. In a Greek-Turkish or Muslim-Christian context, one sees a commonly held meta-confessional culture that can be concretely seen not only in cultural and linguistic traits but also in the knowledge that, for example, local Muslim Turks have about the diverse sacred landscapes of the city which rural co-religionists do not share. Further one could look at factors such as family structure and even traditional forms of dress or table manners. I have, for example, observed Turks and Greeks who shared an identical sense of etiquette at an informal dinner, in a highly embedded way and assumed quite easily to be the norm, with myself as the Anglo-Saxon outsider, often out of step with assumed common knowledge and etiquette between a Greek and Turk who had never visited one another's country.

Looking Backwards

It is significant that in both my fieldwork in Turkey and the Malerkotla case, as in many cases of shared pilgrimage research, there is a consistent theme of looking back to an idealized time when there was communal harmony. I would put forth that one of the most important elements in this particular outworking of re-imagined community is that of nostalgia for a time in which co-existence is seen to have been (at least in retrospect, if not

⁴⁶³ A term used interchangeably with "Greek" in some Turkish contexts. The Greeks were part of the *Milet-i-Rum*, in the Ottoman system, 'the Byzantine/Roman Community'.

⁴⁶⁴ Z.KAZAK: <http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=173875> (retrieved 23 April, 2011).

historically) the norm. Community now is a reflection of community 'then', a reminder of another time when, perhaps, the sharing of space was even deeper. Indeed, much shared pilgrimage in Turkey (with the exception of the more recently developed shrine in Ephesus) is a dwindling phenomenon⁴⁶⁵ that has its roots in the Ottoman and pre-exchange(s) period and thus, not surprisingly hints at a nostalgic discourse that is ambient within the culture, referring back to earlier periods. Despite the relative newness and lack of activity (as previously noted) in Ephesus during the tumultuous periods of Greek-Balkan-Anatolian history, the tendency to remember in association with shared pilgrimage places is still so strong and even so needed, that a discussion around Meryem Ana Evi flows into a discourse on shared history very 'naturally'. Such is the case of Metin, who carries a narrative of coexistence even in the midst of memories of communal violence and chaos, a story that links itself naturally to an Armenian friend's comments on the Church of the Archangels in Istanbul and the inter-religious flock of pilgrims at Meryem Ana Evi, despite the fact that neither church is particularly tied, explicitly, to the Population Exchange and the Greek Orthodox Church. The theme of nostalgia for an ideal coexistence, is a 'floating signifier' comfortable settling with any hospitable topic, so imperative is it in local consciousness.

Both the Anatolian context and that of Malerkotla are, like many other shared pilgrimage places, mythologizing a golden age of coexistence and I am not suggesting that this is not without good reason in many cases. It is, nevertheless, a construction of the past. Despite the reality of difficult periods and oppressive elements of the power structure, there is still a great nostalgia for 'Asia Minor' and Istanbul/Constantinople amongst many Greeks, with an increasing tendency among some in modern Greece to seek out special occasions for visiting the patriarchate and the city generally, according to Couroucli.⁴⁶⁶ Further, during the festival of St. George, a number of Turks and Armenians join the Greeks in celebrating on the Prince's Islands of Istanbul, with a consistent

⁴⁶⁵ BIGELOW: *Saved By the Saint*, 441.

⁴⁶⁶ COUROCLI: 'Sharing Nostalgia in Istanbul', 7.

discourse of nostalgia for the multi-cultural past emerging at the site and in the discussion of it. Couroucli states:

‘Descendents of the old Istanbul-born urban Muslim elites share a common memory of the multi-cultural society of Ottoman times, not possessed by recent migrants from the Anatolian provinces. Pilgrims to Prinkipo⁴⁶⁷ on 23rd April can be said to partake in the imagined community of the natives of Istanbul, those who “remember” the times when the city was home to Turks, Greeks, Armenians and Jews alike. These memories are nourishing a kind of “structural nostalgia”, present day representations and discourses about the past as a lost Eden.’⁴⁶⁸

However, she continues by noting a tendency in the construction of relationship-memory that repeats with frequency in a number of sites throughout the world:

‘How all of this came to end is not discussed, otherwise the magic would be dispelled...Historical narratives on both sides of the Aegean Sea had long avoided the last years of the Ottoman Era...’⁴⁶⁹

Similarly, my informants in Ephesus tended to focus on the more positive aspects of the history of the Aegean coast of Turkey (such as the positive role played by Metin’s grandparents and parents), while the inter-war period was acknowledged as a difficult time for all involved, with little interest in the details. In the Ephesian case, sentiments are similar, but one need only move from Istanbul to the greater Izmir area (in which historical Ephesus now finds itself, as does the modern city of Selçuk, its successor city) to find many of the very same comments and sentiment as I have, in the field. Overall, however, there is a tendency in much of the work that has been done and in much of the discourse interwoven with the sites to rely on these more ‘edenic’ approaches to the past. Couroucli speaks of this in terms taken from Michael

⁴⁶⁷ I refer to them by their English name, ‘The Prince’s Islands’.

⁴⁶⁸ COUROCLI: ‘Sharing Nostalgia in Istanbul’, 5.

⁴⁶⁹ COUROCLI: ‘Sharing Nostalgia in Istanbul’, 5.

Herzfeld, Harvard Anthropologist and writer of 'Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics and the Nation State' as:

'the collective representation of an Edenic order – a time before time – in which the balanced perfection of social relations has not yet suffered the decay that affects everything human. Structural nostalgia characterizes the discourse of both the state and its most lawless citizens...' ⁴⁷⁰

This is not a phenomenon that is particular to Anatolia, the Balkans or even the Middle East, but is found also in the discursive field of the previously mentioned shrine of Haider Sheikh, where there is a very interesting set of contrasting narratives around the Sheikh's resting place. On one side, there are the dominant narratives of coexistence which draw on the remarkable fact of the towns Muslimness and yet its mysterious safety during the partition of the sub-continent. This is also very much validated by the ongoing peaceful and typically Indian and Sufi, ecumenical approach of the space as a shared sacred place. On the other hand, there is the reality that, before partition there indeed were periods in which incidents of religious persecution took place in the city, according to Bigelow. ⁴⁷¹ Overall, however, there is a dominant sense that this is a miraculous place which harkens back to an ideal time when the Punjab was more multi-religious and had a larger Muslim population sharing an edenic past with its neighbours:

'Throughout Punjab I encountered people who looked back at the pre-partition period as a utopian time where there was a common Punjabi culture steeped in saint's shrines, redolent with good local foods, and alive with lovelorn ballads. The idealized Punjab knew no caste, creed or communalism.' ⁴⁷²

⁴⁷⁰ M. HERZFELD, *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State* (New York 2005)109, quoted by COUROUCLI: 'Sharing Nostalgia in Istanbul', 5.

⁴⁷¹ BIGELOW: *Saved By the Saint*, 441.

⁴⁷² BIGELOW: *Saved By the Saint*, 441.

A beautiful but haunting narrative of the past is repeated in different terms about Izmir (Ephesus), Istanbul and elsewhere, where a similar story is told of a multi-religious Turkey in which a certain Anatolian and Aegean culture pervaded people of a variety of religions and languages.

C. Relationship Through Boundaries: ‘Good Fences Make Good Neighbours’⁴⁷³

All respondents to my questions, in both Istanbul and Ephesus, hold to the necessary respectful separation of distinct religious communities, in one form or another, as either an overt statement or an epistemic assumed reality within the discourse through which they operate and speak to me, as the observer and interviewer. While I have been told that, in religious terms, ‘all roads lead home’ on many occasions, I have never been told that ‘all roads are exactly the same, are irrelevant or are unnecessary’ and no one has ever affirmed that they can be indiscriminately mixed, either, whatever some ritual forms might appear to be from the outside. The universalist languaging at the base of the multi-vocality of these ritual settings does not negate a certain separation of identities, traditions and, even practices within the temenos that includes the given church, mosque or sacred objects. Victor Turner, within the particular context of his own key themes, has noted that *communitas*, the experience of unity shared by those who go on pilgrim and do ritual together, does not negate the individual identities of those on pilgrimage.⁴⁷⁴ As in my own case, the scholars writing in the anthology ‘Religions Traversées’ on the theme of shared pilgrimage places in the Mediterranean have noted that there are a number of ways that Muslim pilgrims distinguish themselves when approaching a Christian or multi-faith holy place, a most prominent one being that they generally do not cross themselves or only vaguely imitate the gesture.⁴⁷⁵ But these

⁴⁷³ A traditional Irish and American proverb made famous by the American poet Robert Frost.

⁴⁷⁴ V. and E. TURNER: *Image and Pilgrimage*, 250.

⁴⁷⁵ B. FLICHE: ‘Musulmans et Sanctuaires Chrétiens’, 161.

boundaries are much deeper than the more gross manifestation seen in the 'grammar of devotion' employed via gesture in the spatial practice of Muslim pilgrims. It can be seen architecturally and perhaps most interestingly, discursively.

In the case of Emre, I was particularly struck by his insistence that the transference of the space from a more Islamic to Christian one was not only non-noteworthy but also not in any way objectionable. It belonged to the church and, according to him, while a Muslim can revere Christian and Jewish Prophets, the reverse is not the case because of potential of Muslims to absorb the other two communities, as described above. Boundaries, in his case, are clear and necessary even when they keep out an influence coming from his own cultural context. 'Good boundaries make good neighbours', seems to be the value espoused. And all of this despite Emre's expressed frustration with Western culture and, to a certain degree, the Greeks, who he would sometimes make harsh jokes about, while saying that as a Westerner I would naturally be more supportive of them. None of that frustration, however, would permit a violation in a space where, regardless of ethnicity, an international patronage has developed of Turks, foreigners, Muslim, Christians and others both religious and secular. Perhaps this is helped by the fact that, as a Roman Catholic shrine it is not directly Greek, as before, but highly international. For Emre, it seemed, there was a distinction between the arenas of ethnic conflict and religion. Yet, at the same time, I was consistently impressed with the way that Greeks, Armenians and Western Christians could, regardless of differences in affiliation and culture, still occupy a similar discursive field for Turks who, while recognizing these distinctions, still raised the issues of communalism and religious sites in a relational, associative way during our discussions.

Boundaries as *Loci* of Compromise

I was once asked by a practicing Turkish Muslim from Istanbul, why Western countries are so reticent to give Muslims the right to call the *adhan* (call to prayer) from mosques. He reasoned that this was unfair because, in Istanbul, churches were allowed to ring their

bells, provided that they did not ring them at the same time as the *adhan*, drowning it out.⁴⁷⁶ Of course, the question is incredibly complex, multi-faceted (which 'Western societies' do we compare to which 'Muslim' countries, in which periods? etc...) and requires a doctoral dissertation in its historical contextualization. For that reason, I will not take it up in great detail. However, there is a point from among this field of discourse that is relevant: boundaries are at issue in the maintenance of relations between ethno-religious communities, as seen in a number of examples. Their negotiation raises particularly interesting issues which have appeared consistently in my field work and that of others. In particular, besides the case of Emre there are also the cases of Zeynep and the caretaker Capuchin priest, in the context of Meryem Ana Evi. As previously mentioned, Zeynep (whose parents were Turks that came from Greece) was clearly instructed not to engage in any form of Islamic prayer within the church because it might be seen as an inappropriate appropriation (not on Islamic religious grounds, though, interestingly), but, instead, to offer a *dua* outside the sanctuary in the wider space of the House. In this case the principal of boundaries is quite simple: To maintain harmony, stay separate.

Upon further investigation, I recently learned there is a standardised and long-established way of regulating the Islamic spatial practice in Meryem Ana Evi. The Polish Capuchin with whom I spoke, affirmed what I have seen repeatedly, that Muslim practicing of the spatial complex at Meryem Ana is not particularly elaborate or intense (under the present division of space) as compared to that of others in similar shrines. The priest affirmed that passing through the House and offering a brief invocation, plus engaging with the votive offerings like candles, water etc... is the most common form of spiritual visit or *ziyaret* that most Turks undertake when at the House. According to the priestly caretaker, 'even imams' when visiting, rarely did more than this. As we spoke, he briefly interacted with two young Turkish men who very informally lit candles and then moved on. After joking with them

⁴⁷⁶ G. ARNAKIS: 'The Greek Church of Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire', in *The Journal of Modern History* 24:3 (1952) 240.

in a familiar and playful way, he told me that they were off-duty soldiers and were fairly typical in their relaxed style of *ziyaret*.

Yet, there is always room for contestation in sacred and ritual spaces. As such, Meryem Ana does have some guidelines. For example, a Muslim pilgrim may indeed perform the ritual daily prayers in the House but with the caveat that it be done in the 'L' room (the second room of the house, also sometimes called 'the bedroom'). Particularly interesting to me was the priest's explanation that this was not intended to exclude Islamic prayer from the main chapel, but instead was simply in accordance with the reality that it would be easier in that space due to the location of the legal direction of prayer in Islamic praxis, which could be more easily complied with in the second room. It is difficult to say whether this is concretely the case. In fact, some Muslims would not now be able to pray in either room, as the second room is also quite full of images, although not directly in the angle of the *qibla* (direction of prayer) and thus, debatably, could still be used for prayer by some more relaxed Muslim pilgrims. Here, however, as previously pointed out, we are often dealing with popular piety in the first place and so legalities are not always so very emphasised, however much they may indeed exist in the discourse, particularly for those with a classical Muslim education.

He further went on to mention that it is not customary for Muslim pilgrims to hold congregational prayer and so, even in a group, it is normative (the development of a type of *adab*) for groups of Muslims to pray separately. This is noteworthy because it maintains a certain stasis whereby the space is primarily ritualised in a Christian form, not allowing a great deal of solidarity in Muslim ritual within the space. While such boundaries have been treated fairly lightly amongst many of those I interviewed, it is interesting that such topics were even treated with more respect and concern by my culturally Muslim respondents, many of whom have, as we have seen, fairly intense communal history dating back to the interwar period and beyond.

To return to the Malerkotla example, it is clear that Meryem Ana Evi is not alone in terms of it playing out a wider question of

how to preserve the helpful boundaries that maintain healthy relationships, in the 'good fences make good neighbours' paradigm. Not unlike Malerkotla, Ephesus is defined by its symbolism as a place of communal harmony around a spiritual figure of import, to such an extent that the Popes regularly visit and comment on the power of the place as a location of Muslim-Christian coexistence. Central, however, is the reality that contestation around space is rarely an issue and where it potentially could be, there are indeed these unambiguous rules in place.

On this theme, one incident in the history of Malerkotla is interesting. Bigelow, in explaining that the town has had religious tensions and persecutions in eras previous to the city's positive record during partition, has mentioned that one of the key incidents, historically, had been riots 'triggered by a dispute over the timing of rituals between a temple and a mosque'. Almost certainly this was a situation with public and noisy ritual, otherwise there would be no conflict. Here we have something of a parallel to the debate around soundscape in the local community, as seen in the issue of church bells and the *adhan* of the mosque, a phenomenon that I, incidentally, was very practically aware of while staying in the Beyoğlu district of Istanbul where one can hear the bells of Saint Antoine's church and the *adhan* from several mosques, but never at the same time. Even soundscapes may reflect this intimate interconnectedness between, ritual, *adab* and inter-communal relationship. Even sound may be a place for contestation in which the values articulated in the section are pushed to the fore.

Looking back at the processual-style taxonomy I have made of the types of shared sacred places in terms of their style of sharing via the sorts of relationships maintained in the space from antagonistic to neutral and actively peacefully co-existent, the element of relationship and boundary is ultimately the most key factor in determining where a shrine appears along the continuum of active and passive tolerance. Whereas the tomb of the Patriarchs is a militarised zone in which boundaries are fixed both architecturally and by force, other locations, such as Meryem Ana Evi and Saint Antoine are managed by clergy but based upon the

good will of the multi-confessional constellations that form there, who, on the whole recognise the necessary respect for fences between neighbours and who maintain a etiquette in their grammar of devotion that we have earlier explored in terms of *adab*.

Chapter 8

In the Temenos with a Camera: Tourism and Tradition at Sites of Shared Pilgrimage



At a superficial first glance it would seem that multi-ritualised spaces are chiefly understood through the historical *religious* traditions ('popular' or clerical) that take up practice in them. In our central example it would seem safe to assume that the chief actors are Christians and Muslims. However, such a lens would be detrimentally unholistic in terms of its exclusion of tourism and

what is sometimes called 'religious tourism' from the very diverse and multiply acted and ritualized fields that shared sacred spaces, like all sacralised places, are. What is perhaps most interesting about this subject is the simple fact that, in all the attempts at analysis, there is such a focus on the nearly impossible task of separating the tourist from the pilgrim and the sheer complexity of reasoning through the process of forging some sort of lens through which to examine the extremely fluid reality of this continuum between the theoretically 'pure' secular tourism and exclusively religious pilgrimage, neither of which, in fact, exists in an uncontaminated form. Several thinkers see the spatial practice and identity at the sites as being along a continuum. Beginning with the work of Cohen and Collins-Kriener, we will examine a helpful typology from the context of 'the Holy Land'. All of this is towards the process of recognizing yet another level of praxis within shared spaces to fully expand a vision of what such spaces are, beyond the cliché. Here my intention is not so much to create an instrument for the analysis of pilgrimage as it is to shed some light on the fluidity of relationship between shared pilgrimage sites and tourism, by observing the ways in which those studying them have attempted to classify them, thus giving an overview. In the end, it seems that the approach taken by Collins-Kriener is the closest to the Turkish scenario, perhaps because of the cultural and political similarities between Turkey and the State of Israel.⁴⁷⁷ In the simplest terms, the journey of exploring the range of spatial and discursive practice between the construction of the Pilgrim and the Tourist requires an acceptance of the premise of fluidity. Within this fluidity, however, there are discernable patterns which will be examined, working from Ephesus as a starting point. Above all, the exploration here makes the important point that it is not only religions that converge on shared sites but a variety of secularisms as well, with many shades and modes in between.

⁴⁷⁷ There are exceptions to this. Mingled and popular religious practices are sometimes taken on by the system of power or within the general civil society to reinforce a discourse of co-existence, as we have seen in South Asia and the Balkans, for example. See the discourse on the traditional concept of *komsiluk* (neighbourliness, coexistence) invoked during the war in Bosnia in: I. MAČEK: *Sarajevo Under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime* (Philadelphia 2009) 111.

A. Introduction: An Average Day at the House of the Virgin Mary

Throughout our examination of shared pilgrimage, we have come back to the subject of the Virgin Mary's house at Ephesus, one of the busiest shared pilgrimage sites in the world and one of the most oft-referenced, thus the main case study. On one particular afternoon, despite an almost exclusive interest in the practicing of formally Christian space by Muslim Turks, I interviewed a Capuchin priest and spent some time observing the variety of visitors over a number of hours. I spoke to the priest and a few of the (mainly Turkish) people at the sanctuary and the surroundings which make up an entire spatial field of activity with the actual House of the Virgin being only its nucleus. This wider *temenos* is enclosed in a forest and within its limits a great deal of activity takes place. On this particular day, from the time I arrived, there was an entire repertoire of differing expressions, none of which fit perfectly either an exact model of tourism or pilgrimage, but which took place along a range that was fascinatingly diverse. Before locating the caretaker priest, I encountered another priest who had, astonishingly, walked from Spain, entirely on foot, and was hoping to complete his pilgrimage by Easter in the Holy Land. He had initially approached me to ask directions, some distance from the House, near the Cave of the Seven Sleepers, to both the Cave and the House. While he prayed in the shrine, I observed the variety of visitors, their activities, their gestures and their comments. After the entrance of the Spanish priest, an entirely different sort of guest came inside. In this case, it was a baby of around a year old who wandered into the entrance way of the church, the front of the sanctuary having turned into something of a playground, with the complicity of his father. This was not a particularly busy day. After the priest lightly reprimanded the father, another group entered and received a similar but more severe chastening ('This is a place of worship. Please be quiet!' in Turkish). In this case, a group of men and women of late middle-age entered, none of the women with covered head. After the initial protest of the priest, this group of Turks fell quite naturally into a reverent mode having only been

noisily discussing amongst themselves in the vestibule rather than the main part of the sanctuary, unaware that their voices were carrying all the way into the church. As they approached the altar and the main image of Our Lady of Ephesus, they become very quiet, some holding candles and looking on respectfully. As they filed out, one man, the last to exit, quickly and devoutly gestured out towards the image and then brought his hand towards himself, making the typically Levantine movement bringing the knuckle of the index finger to the lips, kissing it, touching it to the forehead and then saluting into the air, raising the index finger, a very common gesture amongst Alevi Muslims in Turkey when showing honour at the mention of a Prophetic figure. They exited and were followed by a group of Japanese visitors, some of whom carried candles. Most stood respectfully still and one crossed herself, of the eight. Next to all of these however, there were others, on other days carrying cameras, talking in the very heart of the sanctuary and behaving as spectators towards the ritual and devotion undertaken by pilgrims. Even these somewhat irreverent visitors, in some cases, tied strings with 'wishes' when arriving at the petition wall outside the house and past the candle lighting area. On other days, a relatively orthodox and more predictable group could make an appearance. Along with a pilgrim priest there might be imams who would offer a brief invocation and leave without engaging in candle-lighting and women reciting Koran by the well. Between the loud tourist and the prayerfully scripted religious visit, there was much of what one would see in the Alevi group: a simple visit with a brief reverent act drawing upon a pre-existing traditional form, often merging with the ritual praxis suggested by the church's architecture and iconography. Later, there were Sunni Muslim women present in the sanctuary, one group of which simply entered, looked around and exited. The second group stopped in front of the altar and one of the older women instructed the others to recite the brief opening chapter of the Koran, the *Fatiha*.

What emerges from this snapshot is a great diversity in levels of formality, informality, identification with conventional religiosity and above all, a wide diversity of spatial practice despite the House's formal designation as a space for Roman Catholic pilgrimage. What appears is effectively a Third Space

that, via its signifying structure, suggests certain key doctrinal points but does not impose them and instead creates a space of enunciation in which a particularly wide diversity has developed and expressed itself. As seen in the work of, for example, Paul Post, Jos Pieper and Marinus van Uden in 'The Modern Pilgrim'⁴⁷⁸, even more uni-religious sites such as saint's shrines in the Netherlands, host a great diversity of visitors who bring a large variety of motivations. Here I will approach the diverse motivations for pilgrimage through the interpretive lens of a variety of modes and identities, drawing on the work of two thinkers from the University of Haifa. Cohen and Collins-Kriener approach the subject through modes and identities, respectively. In so doing, I affirm the aforementioned realities of fluidity in the relationship between what we generally class as tourism in opposition to 'authentic' travel and pilgrimage. Further, the two approaches help to identify some of the steps along the continuum in between. Finally, from Collins-Kriener we get the Traditional type who, I believe, is well represented not only at Ephesus but at all the sites of shared pilgrimage sites that I have explored, particularly in Istanbul, from Eyup Sultan to the Princes Islands, from churches and Muslim saints shrines to wishing trees. I see these traditional devotees as the largest core group for mixed pilgrimage in Turkey and beyond. They are a very significant culture within shared pilgrimage space, according to my observations in the field. Before developing this however, it is useful to have (a) a more genealogical background to the notions of pilgrimage, tourism and travel as practices that arouse judgements about motivation and authenticity. From there we will move on to (b) an examination of modes and identities at the sites with a particular emphasis on the traditional devotee, concluding (c) with an examination of the way in which Post's concept of basic sacrality helps to illuminate the context of the traditional visitor and her or his sharing of the space with visitors of a variety of religious traditions and none before (d) returning to a final closer scrutiny of pilgrimage at Ephesus as seen in the light of the previous points.

⁴⁷⁸ P. POST, J. PIEPER and M. Van UDEN: *The Modern Pilgrim: Multidisciplinary Explorations of Christian Pilgrimage* (Leuven 1998).

B. Background: Defining Pilgrimage and Tourism

In looking at notions of pilgrimage and tourism, examining where they converge and diverge, there is some difficulty epistemically because of a shift in meanings that is currently taking place, in which, for example, a trip to Graceland in honour of Elvis Presley is termed a 'pilgrimage'.⁴⁷⁹ For the purposes of this section, it is helpful to begin with a more conventional definition of tourism and pilgrimage, moving on to examine the ways in which these definitions can be problematised and their variations re-interpreted. In the simplest terms, I here maintain the language of pilgrimage as a journey with a clearly religious intention that may also include some recreation, while tourism is articulated by the traveller as focused on enjoyment, but may include moments of religiosity or vicarious religious tourism. Etymologically, it has been claimed that pilgrimage is from the Latin term *peregrinus* which need not have strictly religious connotations and that tourist comes from the Latin *tornus*, which indicates a journey for pleasure that returns to its beginning place.⁴⁸⁰ This definition is particularly interesting, as we will later see, because of its genealogical suggestion that tourism is defined by its tendency to see the more familiar *habitus* of home and work as the centre, with pilgrimage ranking the place of religious meaning as a more ultimately significant centre.

Travel as Personal Enrichment

Besides these etymological roots, there is the influence in tourism from the concept of the gentleman's Grand Tour which comes particularly from the increase in travel among Europeans in the

⁴⁷⁹ For a further look at 'pilgrimages' in this genre, see P.J. MARGRY (ed): *Shrines and Pilgrimages in the Modern World* (Amsterdam 2008) particularly Chapter II on Graceland and the grave of Jim Morris.

⁴⁸⁰ N. COLLINS-KREINER: 'Graves as Attractions: Pilgrimage-Tourism to Jewish Holy Graves', in *Journal of Cultural Geography* 24:1 (2006) 70, commenting on A. JACKOWSKI and V. SMITH: 'Polish Pilgrim-tourists' in *Annals of Tourism Research* 19:1 (1992).

18th century, a period in which, amongst the English aristocracy and the wealthy, a tradition of sending young men abroad developed.⁴⁸¹ The practice of sending young men on a tour as a coming of age initiation of sorts was satirised by Lord Byron in his poem *Don Juan*, a social commentary suggesting that the English aristocracy used the Grand Tour as a way of domesticating young men with otherwise out of control desires by exporting them at the time they might make the most controversial or passionate judgements.⁴⁸² The dominant value expressed in the tradition of the Grand Tour (criticisms and satirisations by Lord Byron notwithstanding) was that of cultivation and a strengthening of a young person's level of cultural literacy in the main European centres, beginning in Paris.⁴⁸³

Of course, outside of (and previous to) a Western context, voluntary travel also has had a number of meanings. The prologue to the *Epic of Gilgamesh* describes Gilgamesh as a traveller-king in its first lines:

‘This was the man to whom all things were known; this was the king who knew the countries of the world. He was wise, he saw the mysteries and knew secret things, he brought us a tale of days before the flood. He went on a long journey, was weary, worn-out with labour, returning he rested, he engraved on a stone the whole story...’⁴⁸⁴

The hero-king of the Babylonians was defined by his experience, particularly that gained through travel. In the context of imperial China, travel narratives were not as important as in the West, where the *Odyssey* set the tone for its centrality in Western thinking. Writing about travel, for example, takes a very different route in Han Chinese culture, with a kind of classical graffiti being entirely acceptable in the imperial period, as travellers would mark

⁴⁸¹ J. BLACK: *The British and the Grand Tour* (1985 Kent) 1.

⁴⁸² G. BYRON, T. STEFFAN, E. STEFFAN, W. PRATT: *Don Juan* (London 2004).

⁴⁸³ E. BRODSKY-PORGES: ‘The Grand Tour: Travel as an Educational Device’, in *Annals of Tourism Research* 8:2 (1981).

⁴⁸⁴ B. RADICE (ed.): *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (London 1979) 61.

and comment on places visited, physically writing on them, rather than only writing about them.⁴⁸⁵

Islam and Travel

Further and very relevant to our area, Islam has a discourse of travel that divides the activity into a number of categories, particularly *Hajj*⁴⁸⁶, *Ziyaret*⁴⁸⁷, *Hijra* and *Rihla*; That is, the pilgrimage to Mecca, travel to other sacred places, emigration to a new place or country because of religious necessity and travel for enrichment, respectively. These are the main types of travelled described by Eickelman in the volume *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration and the Muslim Imagination*, reflecting the main types I have encountered elsewhere in reviewing the literature on the subject. Of course, in the Islamic world, *rihla* was typified by the life of Ibn Batutta and, to a similar extent in the Turkic world, Evliya Celebi has played the role of the archetypal explorer.⁴⁸⁸ *Rihla* is an opening to a concept of travel as something wider than the tourist-pilgrim, sacred/secular dichotomy, connected as it is to both religious travel (one can undertake *hajj* or *umra* as a part of a greater journey of *rihla* for example) and the wider goal of *talib al 'ilim*, travelling in search of knowledge, which may not be 'ritual' but is also within the arena of a religious search.⁴⁸⁹ This particular genre of movement over great distances is, as with many

⁴⁸⁵ R. STRASSBERG: *Inscribed Landscapes: Travel Writing from Imperial China* (Berkley 1994) 9.

⁴⁸⁶ While it is not listed here as a separate category, there is also *umrah* which is akin to *hajj* but need not be undertaken during the formal *hajj* season. A number of variations could also be indicated, but these are sufficient as an overview of basic travel and pilgrimage motifs. Some have even focused all of these to the three basic categories of *Hijra*, *Hajj* and *Rihla* (Migration, Pilgrimage, Travel), I. NETTON: *Golden Roads: Migration, Pilgrimage and Travel in Mediaeval and Modern Islam* (Richmond 1993).

⁴⁸⁷ *Ziyaret* is a contested field of travel. Some authorities consider all pilgrimage outside of the *hajj* to be entirely forbidden and some allow for it but with strict guidelines to prevent its practice from developing into idolatry (*shirk*).

⁴⁸⁸ R. DUNN: *The Adventures of Ibn Batutta, A Muslim Traveller of the 14th Century* (Berkeley 2005).

⁴⁸⁹ D. EICKELMAN and J. PISCATORI: *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration and the Religious Imagination* (Berkeley 1990).

epistemes in Islamic thinking, connected to the earliest documents of the tradition, particularly the oft-cited hadith of the Prophet Muhammed, 'Travel in search of knowledge, even as far as China.'⁴⁹⁰

C. Tourism vs. Pilgrimage

For the sake of clarity, I will use the term 'traveller' from here forward to refer to pilgrims, tourists and those on a spectrum in between, as an inclusive umbrella term. While some nuance does appear and new layers of meaning are developing which transgress the typical definitions of pilgrimage and tourism, the use of terminology will begin from the more commonly accepted categories and expand on the subject from there. Having seen, then, that travel has a myriad of manifestations in culture, religion, and the secular, we will move on to look at tourism as something largely constructed as secular and focused on recreation. To be clear, however, this is useful as a construction from the current discourse, but it must actually be constantly problematised. Pilgrimage will be seen generally as movement towards a place with the intention to undertake a sacred act there. In that sense it is a fairly open definition and can be seen parallel to the Islamic notion of *niyyat*, the intention to perform a sacred act that makes it such. *Niyyat* is both a ritual intention and intention generally, something heavily weighted both in ritual law and in the judgement of all actions.⁴⁹¹ Tourism is described further in terms of the travel modes of Erik Cohen, later on.

Can Pilgrimage be Distinguished from Secular Tourism?

Justine Digance, following Chidester, Linenthal and Kim Knott's position that the secular and the religious always imply one another, has said that it is not possible to find one pure motivation for travel, as there are always elements of the profane and the

⁴⁹⁰ I. NETTON: *Seek Knowledge: Thought and Travel in the House of Islam* (Abingdon 2005) vii.

⁴⁹¹ See the famous hadith of the Bukhari collection 'All acts are judged according to intention' and the text: P. POWERS: *Intent in Islam: Motive and Meaning in Medieval Sunni Fiqh* (Leiden 2006) ch 2.

sacred in the motivations of any particular traveller and there are a multitude of options catered to in many of the locations under scrutiny.⁴⁹² Further, Digance emphasizes that modern emerging forms of meaningful travel are developing, not only traditional pilgrimages, as many have noted for some time now. Regarding the especially noted *Camino de Santiago* in Spain, which, despite being a Roman Catholic pilgrimage, has drawn a considerable and broad following, she says the following:

At the height of European medieval pilgrimage activity in the 13th century, approximately half a million people visited the shrine of Saint James at Santiago de Compostela, Spain. Seven centuries later, between 4.5 and 5 million visited the same shrine in 1993 (Murray and Graham 1997). Whether or not all these visitors (tourists hereafter) were 'true' pilgrims undertaking religious devotions is unknown (Stoddard 1997). Nonetheless, indications are that pilgrimage is still as popular as ever, experiencing a marked resurgence around the globe over the last few decades.⁴⁹³

That is to say that there are many levels to be aware of when approaching this theme. First, one must know that the issue of ambiguity in the intention and approach of both 'pilgrims' and 'tourists' is not a small one. What appears to be an entirely new kind of pilgrim has made itself increasingly known. Paolo Coelho and Shirley Maclaine of the New Age book circuit, with very high numbers of sales, speak of their time on the Camino, with little to no reference to any religious orthodoxy or doctrine. As Digance explains, the number of pilgrims is at a very high level, in historical perspective. The combination of these two factors (the unconventional and high volume of current pilgrimage) has led to a new focus on what exactly is going on at these pilgrimage sites, considering the fact that not only are they visited by those who neither seem to be incidentally visiting while on tour, nor going

⁴⁹² J. DIGANCE: 'Pilgrimage at Contested Sites', in *Annals of Tourism Research*, 30:1 (2003) 143-159, CHIDESTER and LINENTHAL: *American Sacred Space*, 17, and K. KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 99.

⁴⁹³ DIGANCE: *Pilgrimage at Contested Sites*, 1.

mainly out of a traditional religious devotion, which Lefebvre considers to be the suggestion made by space regarding its usage (i.e. the sacred space suggests a certain practicing of it). In this case, those who enter for non-religious (or non-traditionally religious) motives do so in a way that subverts the conceived and perceived space through the lived. Here I refer, of course, to Lefebvre's triad which can be alternately described as 'perceived-conceived-lived'.⁴⁹⁴

D. Modes and Identities in Sacred and Secular Constellations of Travel

While here we will examine some of the common classifications that convey a sense of the dominant groups present with their identities and expressed or apparent motives, it is not generally possible to isolate only one reason, such as 'new age style pilgrimage' or 'semi-religious tourism', although in some cases one particular orientation is expressed by those on pilgrimage/touring. Reflecting my own findings, Digance says that,

'A review of the literature supports the view that various dynamics operating within any individual indicate that there is seldom one dominant, over-riding motive explaining solely why people chose to travel at that particular point in his or her life...these journeys are multi-functional, and are particularly more so today when trying to delineate individual motives...'⁴⁹⁵

Having understood these caveats, however, it is instructive in itself to see something of the ways in which lenses have been constructed for the examination of the spectrum from religious pilgrimage to secular tourism, the next step. The very construction is instructive. Proceeding then, I look first at a sociological take on the spectrum of motives behind journeys from tourist to pilgrim, proceeding on, then, to another model (also from an Israeli

⁴⁹⁴ LEFEBVRE: *The Production of Space*, 40.

⁴⁹⁵ DIGANCE: *Pilgrimage at Contested Sites*, 145.

academic dealing mainly with Jewish pilgrimage) that sheds some light for its overlapping sense of socio-cultural-religious groups which I observe as parallel to the Turkish experience. The first looks more generally at the sense of meaning and seeking of a centre by travellers, whereas Collins-Kriener of the University of Haifa approaches the subject more in terms of degrees of religiosity alongside membership in a variety of subcultures, from religious to secular and many degrees between the two.

Erik Cohen, associate professor of Sociology and Social Anthropology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, takes a look at the phenomena from a particularly interesting and fluid angle. He sees that, while one may not be able to, at all times, connect one traveller to one identity (one individual is a tourist, one a pilgrim, one something-in-between) it is possible to designate 'modes' of 'touristic experience' which he labels in five different ways:

1. Recreational Mode
2. Diversionary Mode
3. Experiential Mode
4. Experimental Mode
5. Existential Mode

These span from (1) the most pleasure-focused to (5) the most meaning-based forms of travel/tourism, which he also describes as being on a continuum from (for the tourist) a movement out from the centre for recreation and (for the pilgrim) a movement towards a centre, for meaning.⁴⁹⁶ Below I will give a brief summary of what Cohen says about each mode. The use of the term 'mode' is meant to denote a predominant way of being not a permanent characteristic, so that one could be in different modes even in the same day.

Recreational Mode

According to Cohen, recreation is marked by the fact that it is a going away from the social centre where work and other demands

⁴⁹⁶ E. COHEN: 'A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences', in *Sociology* 13 (1979) 183.

take a toll on the self and its ability to function. The tourist in search of rest seeks a kind of 'recreation' rather than the 'rebirth' of a more transcendent kind that was included in the earlier concepts of more meaningful travel. This, however, has shifted over time. One can take the example of travelling to hot springs, which had originated in a ritualistic format connected to sacred tradition.⁴⁹⁷ While the practice continues, the recreation and re-creation is no longer laden with a symbolism of spiritual renewal, so much as it is a renewal of the self on a more mundane level. Whereas pilgrimage has had cosmological significance, that of recreational tourism is a break from the demands of work and society. This was also incorporated into more traditional societies through festivals that often have a very antinomian character in which there is room to subvert rules. In the context of traditional Christian societies, one can look at the carnival as an example of such a structure in time and place.⁴⁹⁸ The recreational tourist mode is related to this, but bears the mark of a more secular approach. Thus, the attempt is to move away from the centre, seeking something outside of daily life (the centre, in this case) for a mundane (rather than spiritual) renewal of the self or 're-creation'. Cohen says that 'the recreational tourist is primarily "getting away"'.⁴⁹⁹

In my own fieldwork, I saw the theme of this mode in some of the Turkish respondents' explanations about Meryem Ana Evi. Zeynep, for example, pointed to the fact that visitors to Meryem Ana were often there for the natural surroundings and a picnic, primarily, with a visit to the House being more incidental. Recreational mode, in this case, dominating and giving way to something of a pilgrimage in another mode, at times.⁵⁰⁰

Diversiory Mode

Diversiory mode is very similar to recreational mode except that it places no real emphasis on meaning. It is almost entirely

⁴⁹⁷ COHEN: 'A Phenomenology', 184.

⁴⁹⁸ COHEN: 'A Phenomenology', 185.

⁴⁹⁹ COHEN: 'A Phenomenology', 185.

⁵⁰⁰ According to my interviewees, however, the Turkish term *ziyaret* includes both elements: recreational visit and pilgrimage.

biological, automatic and is not charged with any profound significance. It is purely therapeutic with no sense that one recreates oneself in order to relate better to the centre, to the life of work and home that take primary meaning and that one leaves for a significant purpose. The purposeful exit from the centre is Recreational Mode, whereas the Diversionary is truly, purely, diversional. There is no centre, as such, for the person seeking pleasure in Diversionary Mode, unlike the Recreational Mode in which the traveller is leaving an important centre in order to return rejuvenated.⁵⁰¹ Again, a certain number of tourists at Meryem Ana Evi, both Turks and foreigners, are said to come in something of a diversionary mode. It is often said that they are simply having a picnic. This is interesting of course because modes can change, being non-static frames of relating to a place or activity. The priest-caretaker at the House of the Virgin Mary said that Turkish visitors often came in greater numbers during Muslim holidays, not, he said, out of any special intention but simply because the day was free, coincidentally. Or so it can be articulated. Since at least the Ottoman Era, picnicking and going on pilgrimage have been associated and difficult to distinguish, motivational priorities varying according to individual or group of visitors. Often picnics would be in locations where saints were venerated.⁵⁰² This is similar to the case of Zeynep who came to Meryem Ana to picnic with her family, but saw the visitation of the shrine as secondary. Interestingly, this is also parallel with a similar phenomenon amongst Israelis visiting the tombs of saintly rabbis in the Galilee alongside hiking.⁵⁰³

Experiential Mode

Experiential Mode is, unsurprisingly, the search for experiences and thus very much moves towards an outward centre in travel/tourism. Experiential Mode differs from Recreational Mode to the degree that it is a search for something with deeper meaning than simply the renewal of the self in order to return to everyday

⁵⁰¹ COHEN: 'A Phenomenology', 186.

⁵⁰² FAROQHI: *Subjects of the Sultan*, 106-107.

⁵⁰³ COLLINS-KRIENER: 'Graves as Attractions', 82.

life in a state of greater wellness. Unlike Recreational Mode, which is not concerned with authenticity (the tourist in recreational mode is to some degree colluding with the tourist industry by participating in staged folk dances whose authenticity is often questioned etc...), the Experiential traveller is seeking another more profound culture or society, something more truly 'authentic' often, 'off the beaten track'.⁵⁰⁴ Cohen is clear, however, that the Experiential tourist is not a pilgrim. For him, the pilgrim moves towards her or his religious centre, while the tourist in Experiential Mode never fully finds the centre, because there is a constant movement towards something 'more authentic' which keeps the traveller in a permanent state of being outside the host society, maintaining an engaged but dualistic relationship. He says, that the tourist, 'experiences only vicariously the authenticity of the lives of others, but does not appropriate it for himself...'. Taking this from MacCannell's work, (University of California, Davis)⁵⁰⁵ Cohen concurs but considers that the analysis is incomplete if one essentialises the experiential tourist as a type applied to all those venturing into traditional cultural and religious landscapes without also figuring in the next category: the Experimental Mode. Cohen also states that, of course, the gap between Experiential Mode and pilgrimage can be closed and that both become very parallel in certain stages.⁵⁰⁶

As in the case of the other modes, the Experiential Mode was indeed represented during my field work but in Istanbul rather than Ephesus, in the following case: While looking into Turkish ritual practices and *adab* forms, I brought a thoroughly secular Turkish-Kurd (as self-defined) of Alevi background, to the home of a relatively traditional sheikh in the religious Fatih district. Interestingly, despite his upbringing in the city, he consistently placed himself in Experiential Mode during the evening and took great pains to both explain his interest and distance from the event he witnessed. So that for example, he stated that while he had been trying to show me 'authentic Istanbul' by taking me to the homes

⁵⁰⁴ COHEN: 'A Phenomenology', 188.

⁵⁰⁵ D. MACCANNELL: 'Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings', in *American Journal of Sociology* 79:3 (1973) 589-603.

⁵⁰⁶ COHEN: 'A Phenomenology', 188-192.

of his friends, I had, with my research, brought him to a location that was new and more authentic (for him and myself) than anything he could introduce me to. He found this fact very paradoxical and humorous, considering the fact that I am an American. He was concerned that I explain to him the *adab* for the place and afterward reiterated that while he was an atheist, he found this foray into a remnant of an older Ottoman Turkey to be very interesting. He further asked whether as a visitor and an atheist, he would be able to return just to experience the place but without pledging any particular belief in Islam. In this case, there is travel in an Experiential Mode but between the particular subcultures and ideological/religious zones of a city within the borders of one country.

Experimental Mode

In the Experimental Mode, the traveller that perhaps has been in a seeking mode as in the Experiential example, now is going in the direction of seeking out alternative lifestyles to be lived rather than simply experienced from the outside, as in the previous example. In this context, the traveller is also seeking something away from her or his own home cultural or religious context and is taking it on, such as in an Indian Ashram, a practice common from the 1960s among Westerners and continuing today. In this case, the search for a centre can be ongoing. Cohen says that some in this mode are in a constant search for a new centre, taking on new lifestyles regularly.⁵⁰⁷

In the context of Turkey and shared religious shrines, I have previously noted that Konya is perhaps one of the most significant sites, not because it has any overt non-Muslim cultus present but, instead, because it hosts such a huge variety of visitors interested in Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi and his poetry. In addition, from a point of view informed by Lefebvre, there is the very interesting dichotomy between the variety of ritual behaviours undertaken in the space from orthodox Islamic and Sufi gestures to tourists making photographs, and the suggestion of spatial practice indicated by the construction of the space and the power systems implying themselves, first in the

⁵⁰⁷ COHEN: 'A Phenomenology', 188-192.

layer of the religious site and then the museumisation consciously placed over the site by the secularization of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk from the founding of the Turkish Republic.

Besides the ritual conflict that this complex mix can and does engender (depending on the police presence on any given day) there is, of course, the convergence of visitors staying within the city and, to varying degrees, touring and merging with the local culture and *habitus*. They are represented in a number of these modes, according to my research. In particular, however, it was notable that there were some who had come from abroad, converted to Islam and taken on a new lifestyle. Among this type, I interviewed briefly a man in his late-forties/early-fifties, who had come from Great Britain and made a place for himself within the Alevi-Bektashi community in Turkey, despite its sparse representation in Konya, his city of residence. This, however, is a product of a long period of study and travel within the Islamic world which has not ended (he continues to some degree in Experimental Mode, having mostly settled with his outward centre amongst Liberal Muslims in Turkey but also seeking new pastures in other places) and maintains relationships with the Turkish-Kurdish diaspora of Alevis and Bektashis in Germany and Britain. In large part, however, Aziz (this case within my field work) has also crossed over into what Cohen terms 'Existential Mode'.

Existential Mode

In some cases, the traveller enters so fully into the new context that she or he fully takes on the new world to such an extent that it becomes something analogous to a religious conversion, although it can be an entirely secular experience, of course, as in the example given by Cohen of the Western person who settles into a life on a Pacific Island, fully taking its lifestyle on as an answer to deeply-seated needs, or the religious conversion-like choice of taking on a yogic lifestyle in an Indian ashram.⁵⁰⁸ The key in this mode is that a level of commitment has been reached in which the traveller has taken on fully an "elective" spiritual centre, i.e. 'one

⁵⁰⁸ COHEN: 'A Phenomenology', 190.

external to the mainstream of his native society and culture...⁵⁰⁹ rather than permanent residence in a place, as such. Indeed, according to Cohen, what may define a member of this group is that while they do not live in their centre, they live with exilic consciousness, unlike a religious pilgrim whose praxis on a regular basis brings her or him back into communion with the place. He gives the example of non-Jews that have taken up residence in Israeli Kibbutzim and who return for some part of every year while living away in their place of origin. A religious pilgrim, by contrast, maintains a constant ritual-religious link with the place of pilgrimage, such as a Muslim's constant physical and spiritual orientation towards a Mecca that she or he may have visited on hajj or umra.⁵¹⁰ Examples of non-residents returning regularly to Konya, particularly in the second week of December for the year's most important Rumi festival, are numerous and religious affiliation (if there is any) varies within this group. Thus some come and find this to be a centre despite not formally practicing Islam or Sufism while at home. Similarly, Cohen cites the examples of people who travel to an ancestral homeland as being in Existential Mode, whether they are Zionists or Italian-Americans returning to the Sicily of their grandparents.⁵¹¹

Collins-Kriener and Identity among Secular and Religious Travellers in Israel

Another classification that is illuminative for its capacity to typify different demographic groups of travellers/pilgrims is that put forward by Noga Collins-Kreiner, professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Haifa, which she adopts for a better understanding of Jewish tourism and pilgrimage. From here I will take a few elements of her work described below and, along with the work of Cohen, begin to clarify some of what the fluid world of tourism and mixed-pilgrimage is comprised of, with a particular focus on, again, types

⁵⁰⁹ COHEN: 'A Phenomenology', 190.

⁵¹⁰ COHEN: 'A Phenomenology', 190.

⁵¹¹ COHEN: 'A Phenomenology', 192.

of visitors via their identities and ritual behaviours/gestures, but shifting away from a mode-based hermeneutic.

While, of course, her typology of visitors to the Jewish shrines of the Holy Land cannot lie directly on top of a Turkish equivalent, I see a very great deal of similarity between her comments and what I have observed and interrogated at the Turkish shrines I have visited, with both societies having a deep tension and stratification based on levels of religiosity and secular identity. Further, there is a distinct Muslim influence on the practice of pilgrimage amongst Jews in the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. At its most central point, Jewish pilgrimage centres on the Western Wall in Jerusalem and in increasingly peripheral circles, other sites of biblical importance (such as the tomb of Rachel near Bethlehem and Abraham's tomb in Hebron) followed by the graves of other holy personages from later periods.⁵¹² In this third category there is also a great deal of activity, particularly in the north, where the Galilee had been for many centuries a centre for the development of Jewish mysticism. According to Collins-Kriener, the Galilee was also the main centre of religious activity after the destruction of the Second Temple of Jerusalem in 70 CE.⁵¹³ The patronage of sacred graves where the remains of famous Kabbalists were buried is a tradition that began to have an upsurge as Jewish immigrants from North Africa made their way to Israel in the 1950s, bringing with them the influence of Maghrebi Judaic *ziyaret* traditions from their home countries and transplanting them to the Galilean landscape.⁵¹⁴ It is again in these communities with very hybridised bricolage traditions that we find the most fertile ground for analysis, loci in which something is highlighted in a more interesting and intense way than is made obvious in the more monolithic and purportedly 'pure' traditions.

Amongst those coming to these locations, particularly the saintly graves of the Galilee, Collins-Kriener finds several different types which she lists as Very Orthodox, Religious, Traditional, Secular and Other. These are largely self-explanatory.

⁵¹² COLLINS-KRIENER: *Graves as Attractions*, 72.

⁵¹³ COLLINS-KRIENER: *Graves as Attractions*, 72.

⁵¹⁴ COLLINS-KRIENER: *Graves as Attractions*, 72-73.

Very Orthodox, Religious, and Traditional indicate a difference based upon levels of observance of Jewish religious law. However, as I will expand, the third category is particularly useful for understanding the ambiguity found in sacred locations, particularly within Turkey and the formerly Ottoman lands, offering some transplantable insight beyond the local configuration of Jewish pilgrims. I propose to focus on this particular group in Collins-Kriener's analysis for its relevance to shared pilgrimage in the Turkish context. From there, in the next section, I will explain how many pilgrimage-ambiguous tourists and traditional devotees find themselves united by an especially noticeable interaction with the 'basic sacrality' of the sacred spaces they enter. 'Basic sacrality' is a term employed by Paul Post of Tilburg University's Institute of Liturgical and Ritual Studies that will be further expanded here, returning to the theme already indicated, with a more direct application to these particular cases.

Traditional Devotees

Following on from the basics of Collins-Kriener's typology, it is fitting to concentrate on one particular form of Israeli Jewish visitor to sacred sites, who I believe to have a great deal of relevance also in the Turkish context, before moving on to look at the tourist counterpart of the traditional pilgrim and the space of basic sacrality in which both are found, however different their epistemic base in motion towards the sites they visit and the differences in cultural and religious context.

Collin-Kriener identifies the traditional pilgrim by a number of factors including socio-economic, demographic, ethno-religious identification and ritual praxis. The traditional pilgrim is one who is neither particularly religiously observant nor self-identified as secular or non-religious. Rather, she or he draws upon a culturally rich ritual repertoire (Jewish, in this case, but almost every element has a parallel in the Turkish setting) with both more mainstream and popular elements. She describes the traditional pilgrim in the following terms:

'The main reason for the visit of traditional believers stems from their belief in the holy persons themselves, and in what

they can offer them. Most traditional visitors are women of all ages from all over Israel, usually from a low to medium socioeconomic background. Most of them are of Sephardic origin, and many usually visit as part of an organized group. They typically ask for fertility, health, marriage or some other personal need. These women place their supplications on the gravestone of the holy person, light candles, and tie coloured cloths on the branches of a “wishing tree” in order to have their wishes granted.

It is important to note that only a smallest group (18%) of the visitors described themselves as religious people. *The phenomenon as a whole was found to be more traditional and popular than religious*⁵¹⁵...⁵¹⁶

In greater detail regarding popular religion itself in this local context, between the contrasting demographics of orthodox pilgrimage and tourism, she states,

‘Between these two extremes are the traditional visitors. These are closer to the orthodox, believing in the power of the *tsaddik* (holy person) and his helpful advice...The difference may be observed in the customs and behaviours of the different groups. Whereas the pilgrims pray and the secular visitors just visit, the mid-scale group takes part in many local folklore activities such as lighting candles, placing supplications and notes, and buying souvenirs such as holy water, pictures of the *tsaddik*, candles, greetings, pamphlets, amulets against the evil eye, and more.’⁵¹⁷

To clarify, then, in this case there are a number of indicators that mark the practice of traditional popular religion in this Galilean setting, most of which have some correspondence to the Turkish multi-religious context within which our questions are focused. The Key elements are:

⁵¹⁵ Emphasis added.

⁵¹⁶ COLLINS-KRIENER: ‘Graves as Attractions’, 82-83.

⁵¹⁷ COLLINS-KRIENER: ‘Graves as Attractions’, 82.

- Sephardic Identity

Most of the pilgrims falling into this category, which literally translates as ‘Spanish’, are from Muslim societies or societies with a significant history of Muslim influence, such as Greece. The term Sephardic indicates that almost all of these communities use the ‘Spanish’ rite in their worship due to the influence of the Jews of Islamic Spain in their communities.⁵¹⁸ Jews from the deep Islamic world are also sometimes distinguished from Sephardim from around the world by referring to them as Mizrahi. However, Collins-Kriener does not seem to distinguish between these two groups who overlap in geography, culture and ritual praxis. While it is not appropriate to go into an extensive explanation of Mizrahi and Sephardic identity, it will suffice to say that it has been treated as a secondary identity to that of Western Ashkenazi Jews. As an ‘orientalised’ identity it is at times associated with irrationality, superstition and (most unfortunately, for the Mizrahim-Sephardim) with Arabness, in Zionist discourse.⁵¹⁹ This has led to a great deal of tension within Israeli society at certain points in history. So here we have, drawing on concepts earlier mentioned, a subaltern positioning for those engaging in these practices, drawing on a bricolage of ritual forms that come from a cultural and religious context in which Jews and Muslims engaged in shared pilgrimage and mutually influenced one another’s praxis outside of the Mosque and Synagogue.

- Marginal Social-Economic and Gender Status

It has been earlier noted, in the chapter on key concepts, that popular and even magical religiosity can be found at all levels of society, but that there is a particular concentration in marginalised layers of traditional societies. It is therefore also of import that those coming to the site who are classed as ‘traditional’ come not only from an ethnic community that is marginal and ‘eastern’ but that those from the community who make the pilgrimages are often

⁵¹⁸ P. MEDDING: *Sephardic Jewry and Mizrahi Jews: Studies of Contemporary Jewry*, Volume XXII (Oxford 2007) 170.

⁵¹⁹ E. SHOHAT: ‘The Invention of the Mizrahim’, in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29 1:5(1999) 2-7.

female (marginalised by gender) and low-earners (marginalised by class and/or economics).

E. Attribution of Meaning and Basic Sacrality

What remains to be addressed, then, about these varieties within the spectrum from tourist to pilgrim is upon what basis they all seem to find themselves within the same space. From those who are tourists but seek a (fairly post-modern) sense of meaning to those who come with clear religious intention, there is some common denominator. Some, of course, may genuinely be interested in nothing more than the aesthetic (i.e. at a location like Meryem Ana there is both a great deal of nature, beaches and, of course, archaeological sites nearby). But, as we have seen with Cohen's modes, there are a number of forms of travel that can very easily take on a more meaningful colour. I would propose, then, that in this ambiguous place between the extremes, where ritually engaged and traditional travel take place, there is an underlying common sense of what Post calls 'basic sacrality' which, to varying degrees, visitors choose to access. This concept is useful in looking also at shared pilgrimage, separately, but here we will look at it more in relationship to the less conventional level of shared pilgrimage which, paradoxically, includes those who are not pilgrims, strictly speaking. The intention in exploring this issue is to understand the basic sacral context in which all of these visitors are able to engage via these varied discourses, narratives, rituals and intentionalities.

Post has spoken of the concept of basic sacrality with particular reference to his work on the Tor Tre Este Jubilee church in Rome.⁵²⁰ The narrative around this particular house of worship is that it was designed by a Non-Catholic (Jewish) architect in a style that was extremely minimalist, missing many traditionally Roman Catholic symbols, and which relied on natural light as a very prominent element over the typical elements of church architecture. The fact that this was the Jubilee church and yet was so ecumenical in style that it did not even have a cross, initially

⁵²⁰ POST: 'A Symbolic Bridge', 1-2.

provoked a great deal of criticism.⁵²¹ Interestingly, however, the merging of forms that were at once Roman Catholic and based on more universal symbolism such as light and space, created, in the end, a highly fluid and open space which was capable of drawing both Catholic and Non-Catholic visitors and pilgrims. This is the phenomenon that Paul Post terms 'basic sacrality'. It is not a definable place, moment or formal technique in the repertoires of artists, architects or ritualists so much as it is a quality, a colouring that can appear in space and ritual praxis, drawing on very basic elements such as water, light, and open space. It is also a quality found by those who visit those spaces or is indeed something they bring with them to the space via their own living and perceiving of the space, in Lefebvre's terms. In order for a cult to flourish in which Christians, Muslims and even those who don't strongly identify with either category, feel comfortable acting ritually, there must be a general sense of a basic sacrality that permeates the sanctuary and those who venerate it.

Multi-accessible Basic Sacrality and the Modes of Cohen

A general sense of searching can be found in a number of Cohen's modes and the ambiguity of this search (from more recreational to meaningful, *per construction*) is precisely what marks the basic sacral quality that can be co-present in a number of sacred places, particularly those highlighted within this research undertaking. Here I would like to highlight the overlapping between the two fields by drawing attention to two important points that help to illuminate the relationship between Cohen's modes: the flexibility of modal shifts during travel and the tendency of the basic sacral to be implicit in place and culture to such a degree that the landscape and its actors are so mutually interconnected that it becomes difficult to distinguish pilgrimage from tourism or recreation, as 'pure' motivations in and of themselves. In order to illuminate these points I will draw on an interview regarding East Mediterranean folk religious practices with Katerina, a young Greek woman resident in the Netherlands.

⁵²¹ POST: 'A Symbolic Bridge', 1-2.

In order to grasp the modal shifting that takes place one must be familiar with the ease with which this can take place due to a historical-cultural imbrication that sacralised spaces and acts can have. Saying 'God bless you' when someone sneezes or carrying a US dollar that has 'in God we trust' and ancient Egyptian/Masonic symbolism⁵²² are examples of ritual and sacral (or in the later case, specifically esoteric) signs that can permeate a cultural context to the extent that their embeddedness is taken for granted and need not always be employed with the overt intention to 'be religious' or convey a religious intention. It is, therefore, not particularly difficult to move into the realm of spiritually significant signs and signifiers, whether one would articulate any particular overt religiosity or belief, although certainly some have raised objections to these practices and signs for a variety of reasons, treating them as something more significant than simple symbols or idioms, cognizant of the discursive ramifications. Some activists in the US have even gone as far as to mark out the word "God" in the constitutional motto 'in God we trust' written on their dollars.⁵²³ In a less consistently ideological mode, many will employ expressions and traditional forms that can be classified as religious, folk religious or, esoteric, because of its facility of access within the discursive systems and the habitus encouraged or imposed by the cultural context in which one lives. What is implied by the utilisation of these signs, then, varies via the intentionality of the individual persons and collectives who adopt them.

⁵²² Here I emphasize, by using an example from the "West", the obvious but sometimes overlooked fact that ritual, folklore and arcane symbolism are not somehow the provenance of a 'Mystical East' where people perform rituals. My case studies must of necessity be in places such as the East Mediterranean and Middle East but such things are not limited to that cultural zone.

⁵²³ Freedom From Religion Foundation: <http://www.ffrf.org> (accessed 21 June, 2010) F.F.R. Foundation pushes for a more rigorous secularism in the US governmental system seeking to eliminate overt religiosity and reference to God in official contexts such as the use of 'In God we Trust' as the national motto. One sympathiser with this cause has created a webpage asking Americans to cross the word "God" off their currency with a red pin. (<http://www.lava.net/~hcsc/godlessmoney.html>, accessed 21 June, 2010)

While interviewing a woman from Crete (Katerina) about the role of folk ritual in her family, she was quick to point out that even though her parents were committed leftists and theoretically non-religious, they did have their children baptized in order to be part of the community and, further, her mother has knowledge of traditional ritual forms which one might not expect from someone who is a self-identified atheist. Within her community, like many, there was a belief in the evil eye and the power of curses. When, due to certain unusual physical symptoms, she was said to be under the influence of the evil eye, her leftist and atheist mother consulted some family members and quickly conducted a small ritual to remove said evil influence. It appears that there was no major ideological debate but rather a practical response to the situation, although my informant (Katerina) did in retrospect find it odd and paradoxical that her mother operates in such different terms at different times, fulfilling differing needs and making differing statements. In looking at this incident, I was particularly struck by the fact that Katerina used the word 'fluidity' to describe the way in which Greeks, even leftist atheist-identified ones, approach ritual, this being both a very key word in my research and vocabulary employed by her with no prompting from me. In this case, even group affiliation and theoretically mutually exclusive ideologies are in a fluid relationship, not only to religious ritual but to life generally, in a highly integral style of being. It is, then, very all-encompassing, the frame of ritual fluidity, moving even between levels of discourse (socio-political, supernatural, officially religious) that are not here taken up.

In another context, Katerina made a particularly relevant comment, reflecting something of the unclear divide between what Cohen terms 'Recreational Mode' and pilgrimage, with recreation being a move towards an elective centre and pilgrimage towards 'a traditionally given one'.⁵²⁴ In one case, Katerina pointed out that in Greece monasteries are places of rest and recuperation (more recreational, somewhat diversionary mode) and that some of her otherwise avowedly atheist relatives would at times go to these places in the countryside. Katerina said that this was not religious

⁵²⁴ COLLINS-KRIENER: 'Graves as Attractions', 191.

but simply because, in the Greek countryside the monasteries offer good lodging and one might want to simply be in the silence pervasive in a monastery environment. She did say that one might light candles on such occasions but in a sort of informal way, to participate in the ethos of the place or out of a sense of tradition.⁵²⁵ This seems partly parallel to Zeynep who felt that her small *ziyaret* experiences in Ephesus at the House of the Virgin were primarily visits to appreciate the natural beauty and quiet of the forested area with the recitation of a brief koranic verse and petition. In both cases, there is an articulated focus on the non-religious and a simultaneous participation in some aspect of religious ritual but described by the visitor in a way that still privileges and emphasises clearly the non-religious aspect of the practice. This then shows something of a modal shift within an overall intention to engage in tourism rather than pilgrimage as the umbrella itinerary. The overlapping of these various motifs brings us back to the theme of basic sacrality as a qualitative element.

Post's research on basic sacrality has previously been mentioned in the case of architectural design that was both ecclesiastical in base but open-windowed (literally) in its capacity to use basic elements that could draw in a wider range of contemplative and touring visitors through its emphasis on elements with a very general appeal. Further, he has done quantitative and qualitative research on the motives for visiting Roman Catholic shrines in France and the Benelux area, specifically Banneux (a site of alleged Marian apparitions in Belgium), Wittem (the Shrine of St. Gerard Majella in the Netherlands) and Lourdes, among Dutch travellers.⁵²⁶ The results of the study indicated that the majority drew on religion and tradition in order to explain their pilgrimage but a large number gave other motives or mixed more religious with secular motives. Responses ranged from petitioning for divine help, or deepening faith, to existential reflection, healing, recreation, social

⁵²⁵ COLLINS-KRIENER: 'Graves as Attractions', 185-186.

⁵²⁶ P. POST, J. PIEPER, M. VAN UDEN: P. POST, Chapter One: 'Reasons for Going', in *The Modern Pilgrim: Multidisciplinary Explorations of Christian Pilgrimage* (Leuven 1998) 19.

motivations, accompanying others and simple curiosity to see the site.

In the above cases, what we see is again an element of basic sacral quality, a common ground between overtly religious and non-religious identities and ways of being, in which, for example, both monastery pilgrims and the avowedly secular appreciate the same characteristics which are neutral in creedal terms: silence, peace and natural beauty. I want to be very cautious here to state that it is not my intention in analysing to somehow impose a pseudo-religious definition onto the explanatory narratives of those who engage in weekend picnics at shrines or holidays in monasteries, effectively muting their own voices in my own analysis or sacralising what is not so intended. To the contrary, what I am looking for is the constantly changing fluidity of meaning attribution, seeking out a particular pattern that is present but need not dominate the subjectivity of others. Instead, what I wish to indicate here is that there is a basic sacrality that makes itself *available*, a quality in a particular space and ritual temenos that is accessible but not compulsory. In diversionary mode, Cohen says, there is no real centre or search for authenticity but a focus entirely on pleasure. It is my contention that when modes shift, they can very easily draw upon any element of the environment in which travel is taking place: a cathedral by the beach or a meaningful silence in nature. A change from a diversionary mode to a more existential one, for example, can take place in relationship to recognition of a location's basic sacrality, a shift in focus and intention. From there, rather than necessarily drawing on a doctrinally complicit orthodox source to determine spatial practise, there is a tendency amongst many (though certainly not all) of my respondents, particularly in Ephesus, to shift modes and to partially draw on tradition while not emphasising religious belief, similarly to some of Post's respondents.

This indicates, bringing together Post on basic sacrality and Cohen on a modal approach to travel, that one may both switch modes and engage based on different spatial, ritual and traditional sources because of the inherent fluidity of these elements and because of their prominence of suggestion and praxis in the places

where many 'go on holiday'. So wide is the range upon which some draw that, as seen in the case of Katerina, there need not even be an ideological consistency, but rather a pragmatic approach that can shift arenas and reformulate itself whether dealing with politics, or the evil eye. Similarly, religious modes can shift among Muslims and Christians in Turkey and elsewhere when, pragmatically, it seems best to be in a church or the shrine of Eyup Sultan in Istanbul to offer an animal sacrifice for the wellbeing of an Armenian Christian at the tomb of a companion of the Prophet Muhammed. Similarly a shift between modes can take place from a more diversionary to a more meaning based mode in the same day, drawing on the resources of the environment and often those resources that are most basically sacral are the most accessible whether trees, water, candles, or the generally peaceful and ritualised atmosphere of the House of the Virgin Mary, as a stopping point along a route through Nightingale Hill. A basic sacrality may be accessible at any time while travellers are in motion regardless of the overall intention and this same fluidity of form and intention is entirely ubiquitous, from the rituals and ideologies of Greek islanders or British holiday-goers sunbathing between Romanesque cathedrals and the Mediterranean Sea; Modes of being, identities and even ideologies can shift and reshape according to circumstances of arena and space.⁵²⁷ Indeed, many more such examples could be cited in an endless variety of reconstellating spaces, modes, ritual formulae and discourses. What is, however, most key is that when we examine shared sacred space, we observe that not only are a range of religious traditions and motives present, but that they interpenetrate and shift, rarely keeping to a fixed type and that this variety of modes is often built on a flexible and *multi-accessible* basic sacrality.

F. Ephesus

Travel can take on a great variety of meanings, speak the language of a number of discourses, and potentially be coloured

⁵²⁷ F. BARTH: 'The Analysis of Culture in Complex Societies', in *Ethnos* (1989) 130.

by myriad identities and modes of being and acting. As we have seen, in even one individual on one journey all of these elements can vary and change, moment by moment. As Collins-Kriener states:

‘...in the 21st century the differences between pilgrims and tourists are fading while numerous points of similarity are emerging: both require spatial movement and both could involve an emotional desire on the part of the individual to visit sites meaningful to him or her. Overall, however, the visitor’s experience, be it termed pilgrimage or tourism is, in fact, not homogenous; rather, it comprises different experiential types.’⁵²⁸

Examining all of the elements that can come together in such shared pilgrimage spaces, several themes have shown themselves to be prominent: fluidity and basic sacrality in ritual activity, a shifting variety of modes and identities in sacred space and the particular case of traditional pilgrims at sacred places in the Islamic world and areas with Islamicate culture and history. The cases of fluidity have repeated themselves quite obviously throughout and are easily observable in every case. At the Blacharnae Church of the Virgin Mary in Istanbul and the House of the Virgin Mary in Ephesus, Muslim women say ‘Bismillah’ before entering and lighting candles. In the day described at the start, an Alevi Muslim repertoire of gestures was employed by visitors to the House.

What, however, is less explored is the role of the traditional visitor at holy sites. In the case of Turkey, there are some more widely applicable elements of this type, as given in the Israeli case that fit very well with Turkish popular religion. The similarities are in the areas of praxis, religious marginality, origins in an Islamicate cultural zone, highly local ritual-religious contexts and a history of multicultural/multi-religious community (even if such coexistence is on the decrease).

⁵²⁸ COLLINS-KRIENER: ‘Graves as Attractions’, 161.

Praxis

Taking the House of the Virgin Mary as a primary example, we see an overlap in ritual praxis between what Collins-Kriener describes as a 'traditional' visitor in the Galilee and what could also be termed 'traditional' in Anatolia, for its drawing on tradition rather than contemporary secularism or religious orthodoxy. In both cases, we have the veneration of deceased holy men and women, the sale of items such as images and other holy objects such as holy water. Also found for sale and in use are items for purposes of protection from malefic influences such as the evil eye.⁵²⁹ In Ephesus, as in the Jewish shrines of the Galilee, such amulets are available but at the House of the Virgin, they are attached to icons. Collins-Kriener states that tying coloured cloths to a 'wishing tree' is also very common among pilgrims and, as we know, this was a practice at the house and has developed into the current wall where cloths and strings are tied for the sake of maintenance.⁵³⁰ Islam, Judaism and folk practices share in common an emphasis on acts and orthopraxy.⁵³¹

Religious Marginality

There is often, in traditional devotion, a tendency for devotees to occupy something of a marginal position. Women, for example are highly represented particularly in the Traditional Israeli demographic and this very much holds for the House of the Virgin

⁵²⁹ COLLINS-KRIENER: 'Graves as Attractions', 82-83.

⁵³⁰ It is noteworthy that in my fieldwork with members of the Alevi community, the elders of the community gave a theologically sound reason from Islamic discourse for the practice. It seems, though, that this is a form of practice that exists beyond Islam and could possibly, therefore, pre-date the later explanations.

⁵³¹ BELL: *Ritual Perspectives*, 191-197. In the case of Judaism, Bell says on page 192, 'As a corpus of law proscribing what and how things should be done, Halakah made no effort to theologize. According to the historian of Judaism Jacob Neusner, what Christians spelled out in theological writings, rabbinic scholars "wholly encapsulated in descriptions of ritual."' J. NEUSNER: 'Ritual Without Myth: The Use of Legal Materials for the Study of religion', in *Religion: Journal of Religion and Religions* 5 (Autumn 1975) 91, 100

Mary and the Muslim-Christian sanctuaries of Turkey, based on my own observations during fieldwork and with interviewees of both genders, who emphasised many of the shrines (including the House) as places women go to pray about what are seen to be women's issues (children, marriage, family concerns). It is also the case that the practice of saint veneration is itself marginal according to many Jewish and Muslim orthodox authorities, despite it also being supported by state and clerics at certain times.⁵³²

Islamicate and Multireligious Pluralistic Culture

One factor which a very large number of mixed pilgrimage sites share is having developed under an Islamic cultural umbrella for some period, a context in which, while there was not religious equality in the sense we now formulate it, there was a high level of harmony in the system as then constructed. So, the North African Jews that frequent sacred sites in the north of Israel no longer live in a majority Muslim context but their *ziyaret* practices have a decidedly Islamicate style to them, according to Collins-Kriener.⁵³³ Of course, the Christian shrines in Turkey have developed their Muslim practices and followings beginning in the Ottoman era (late Ottoman in the case of Ephesus) or even earlier in the Byzantine-Seljuk period.

Local Culture

This culture of *ziyaret* found among Christians, Muslims and Jews in the Islamic world is very local. It is local religion as folk religion often is. Collins-Kriener speaks of much of the practice stemming from a North African context in which local holy Rabbis are venerated. In the world of Muslim-Jewish ritual cross-fertilisation, this localness was notable.⁵³⁴ Similarly, both in my fieldwork and that of others, there is a consistency of localness in

⁵³² J. MERI: *The Cult of Saints Among Jews and Muslims in Medieval Syria* (Oxford 2004) 68.

⁵³³ COLLINS-KRIENER: 'Graves as Attractions', 73.

⁵³⁴ COLLINS-KRIENER: 'Graves as Attractions', 73.

the traditions that are practiced at shared pilgrimage shrines. The House of the Virgin at Ephesus does not have a very long tradition of local history because it is a recently created shrine but, as I observed, there are small signs of the place's embeddedness in local culture, such as the Virgin Mary Elementary school in the village near Ephesus and the tradition of the local Alevis to always take their visiting spiritual leaders on *ziyaret* to the House of the Virgin Mary. Maria Couroucli notes that the pilgrimage trail followed by Muslim Turks among the churches of Istanbul is very local knowledge that Muslims emigrating from other parts of Turkey generally do not have and thus they do not tend to engage in mixed pilgrimage as often.⁵³⁵ Again, folk practices that make up the religious life of the traditional pilgrim (whether in Northern Israel, Anatolia or elsewhere) are tied intimately to the land and the pluralistic context of the land from which they spring. Both Turks seeking the help of Muslim and Christian saints and Jews venerating the graves of holy rabbis can be similarly classed as 'traditional' pilgrims in this sense also.

Conclusion

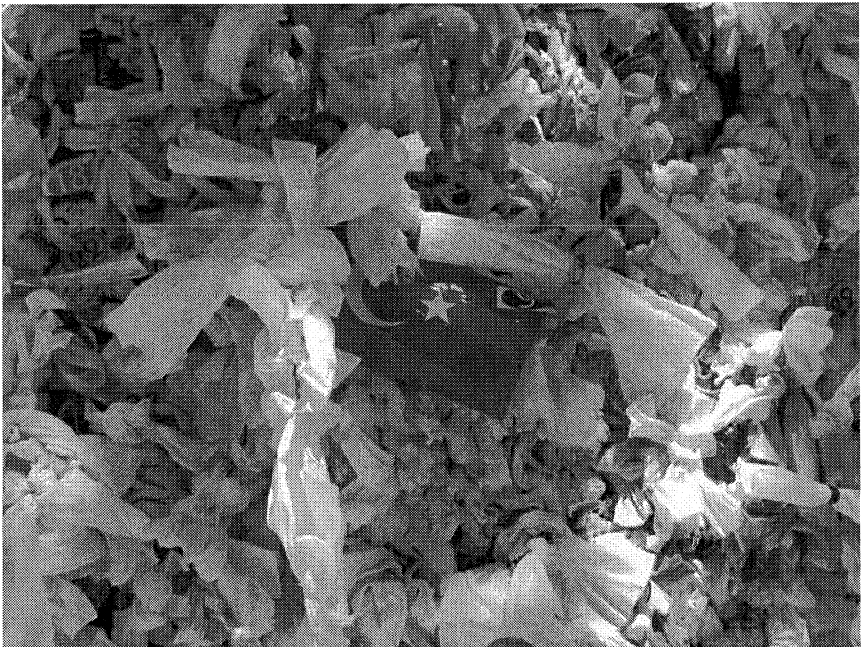
The fundamental position of this research is that sacred places are open floating signifiers. While they suggest a spatial practice (generally religiously orthodox) via their construction of space in shape and symbolism (as emphasised by Lefebvre) they are, nevertheless, practiced in a wide variety of ways at the level of lived religion. Further, travel has taken on a highly varied range of meanings as an activity that can be anything from a release of work pressure to a life-altering experience of the other or the taking on of a new life-style all together. Along this range of experience, it is clear that those who enter into many of the shared pilgrimage places that concern this study fall along a long range from those who generally see their journey as recreational to those on formal pilgrimages based on formulated and orthodox religious belief. It is also increasingly clear to scholars of leisure, tourism and pilgrimage that all travellers step in and out of these modes often, switching from recreational to overtly religious modes on the same

⁵³⁵ COUROUCLI: 'Sharing Nostalgia in Istanbul', 4.

day. As such, this is a fluid phenomenon in the already highly fluid world of mixed religious sites. However, some patterns are discernible: Many travellers communicate a sense of a centre and whether the place visited or the home and work seem more at the centre seems to be a good indication of the degree to which their travel has something in common with pilgrimage, whether the travel has any overt religiosity or not. Of course there are also those who are steeped in a discourse of religion and pilgrimage but, again, there is a great deal of variation in the form this takes and the multiple identities possible in that context. It is my position that, outside the general dichotomy of pilgrim vs. tourist there is a category of visitors to holy sites who practice the spaces concerned in a way that is neither one that appears to be 'visitation' nor an orthodox religious pilgrimage. This is a type of pilgrim that can be understood as a 'traditional' devotee, one who doesn't come so much to observe orthodox dogma or to merely spectate, but who acts ritually with an intention that springs from long-standing folk tradition, a tradition that may be very old and inevitably drawing on a religious repertoire but often not entirely orthodox by clerical standards. Interviewing Muslim pilgrims to Meryem Ana Evi and observing even more, it has become clear to me that shared pilgrimage draws on just such an ethos of tradition, one that is very much coloured by the pluralistic cultures of much of the Islamic world and those places with a lingering influence from Islamic empires. It is an ethos of practice and ritual over theology, of local stories and traditions and one built on a history of co-existence, perhaps at times rocky, but yet still yielding fruit in shared ritual forms.

Chapter 9

Identity



While enquiring into ritual practice in the House of the Virgin at the remains of Ancient Ephesus, I was struck by the degree to which a place can become emblematic, a signifier of individual and interconnected communal identities, surpassing even the physical location itself in importance. While in the field in Turkey and interviewing immigrants from the region living abroad (Greeks in Western Europe, Bosnians in the US, Turks in the Netherlands), identity was an inevitable subject, so implicit in the discussion of shared pilgrimage (and even so implicit in the questioning of it as a

practice) that it never went unaddressed in some form. At some times the responses could be quite extreme in their varied assessments. In one interview with Muharram, a secular Kurdish Alevi from a small village in Eastern Turkey but now residing in the Netherlands, it was explained to me that the community of his origin had historically been deeply enmeshed with the local Armenians, particularly because, as non-Sunnis, they were closer to others at the social margin. As I reviewed some of my case studies with him as a third party informant, a very clear pattern appeared: most of those who I had interviewed were perceived by him to be in some way marginal ethnically or religiously, like his own community. Further, he could localise each one within an older non-Muslim ambit, generally. If I mentioned a person from the Black Sea region, the suggestion was that such an individual's religious flexibility came from an ancestral Greek tradition, a mixed origin. Similarly, Muharram responded in the same way for interviewees from other regions, attributing a variety of causes from foreign religious cultures whether through intermarriage, conversion or proximity. It seemed that Non-Muslimness loomed large in this worldview. While I cannot say whether this notion (somewhat metaphysical in its attribution of power to ancestry) is empirically correct and would instead put forward the view that ritual influence by both Muslims and Non-Muslims would have carried on in both directions through contact and shared history, Muharram's comments point to an important representatively emic viewpoint which will be explored forthwith. From within some segments of Turkish culture there is an articulation of mixed identity (perhaps better articulated as *interdependent identities*) that is intimately wed to the issue of mixed pilgrimage practice.

I have previously explored a scheme for understanding imagination as it connects to sacred space and is, in a sense, sacralised absolute and relative (even relational) space. These multi-ritualised sanctuaries raise an inevitable query about the subjective worlds of those who venerate them. Indeed, it is the implicit issue of how identity and separate belief can remain intact when Muslims visit and pray in Christian sanctuaries such as Meryem Ana Evi, that gives birth to much of the attention drawn towards the subject. Focusing the issue on the questions of identity

is to make the implicitly obvious a bit more explicit. In a number of contexts I have encountered the same surprise that such phenomena even exists, but there is a more profound disbelief, it seems, among those who are more deeply culturally Western.⁵³⁶ Talal Asad, anthropologist and interculturalist of note, has opined that when we encounter in another culture a notion of ritual which does not fit our mould of reality, something entirely paradoxical, it means that we have seen our own Western epistemic assumptions about the subject, however indirectly.⁵³⁷ I posit that this is not merely the case with ritual but also with the practicing of religious identity as ritual. It is this question of how those of two or more identities or beliefs can appreciate the same space, even making invocation within it, that animates much of this study. And so, here I choose to focus on a few areas that illuminate the issue of identity in sacralised spaces which draw on a variety of examples, remaining focused on the historical experience of what is now modern Turkey, as I prefer to take a localised perspective where possible. I see this as well-suited to an emic focus, so that seeking out the internally held knowledge and ways of knowing within a culture can better be undertaken in the context of the more local rather than relying on meta-knowledge held by those higher up in the power structure who construct what Islam, Christianity, religion and pilgrimage are in more official terms than the lived and grounded religion of which Kim Knott and others have

⁵³⁶ Here it is important to note two modifying factors. First, I do intend to 'return the western gaze' by include the observation of western reaction to shared pilgrimage. Second, I do not into to dissect the 'oriental' from outside. For that reason, it bears mentioning that there is no one cultural block in the Islamic world that understands the religious hybridity present in the former Ottoman Lands and the Islamic world generally. In fact, during one interview process an Alevi woman brought up in Europe was somewhat incredulous that Turkey would have this sort of ritual practice present because she was only familiar with the contested nature of sacred space and identity between Sunni and Alevi Turks. There is, however, a notable difference in the level of familiarity that those who do not have a history of shred pilgrimage in their cultural context show compared to those from regions where the potential for witnessing or participating in such practices is higher. This follows naturally and is not the product of any intrinsic essential 'western' or 'easterness'.

⁵³⁷ ASAD: *Genealogies of Religion*, 55-79.

written. After all, the reality is that these are often confounded by lived religion as local practice, for better or worse.

This lived religion is also lived identity. Lived identity is equally fluid and not as simplistic as commonly assumed. Standardised identities (meta-identities, religious or otherwise) are often confounded by local practice. In order to examine identity, then, there is again the need for a contextualisation of the local, taking into account some of the national, transnational and historical influences at work. An unearthing of the subject will consist of several interpretive stages, beginning with a focus on identity as a theme in itself, from the angle of the construction of identity through the mechanism of self and other, stopping to consider the role of narrative as a main locus of identity construction and the multiple but co-present masks of identity construction. From this point, the formulation of identity will be considered as a tool of solidarity production, following onto the particular case of identity fluctuation and fluidity in context of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. From there we will draw the space under consideration into sharper focus by looking at the way in which these factors figure into the narrative and ritual fields/arenas of Ephesus always contextualised via parallel shared pilgrimage sites found in the cultural zone of the former Ottoman territories. Muharram described a number of scenarios which are familiar to any student of shared pilgrimage, in which the Kurdish Alevi Muslims of his village would come to petition the monks of a local Armenian monastery to pray for rain during drought because, as they explained to the monks, there was no way to know which local person was the most saintly and therefore closest to God's ear. Certainly, according to the cosmology of this Kurdish Muslim, religion was not the determining factor in finding a Muslim or Non-Muslim's place within religious identity hierarchy. However, having established that this phenomenon is a fact of traditional culture in the Islamic world, despite its largely unofficial status,⁵³⁸ a final element, with which I will conclude,

⁵³⁸ This can be overestimated, however, because not all Muslim pilgrimage to the House of the Virgin Mary, for example, is entirely 'folk religious' in the sense of being lay-led and incorporating what are sometimes considered

remains to be seen: We have previously gone further than the simple realisation that ritual action is fluid by more deeply contextualising and theorising the ways in which this fluidity is lived. After approaching identity fluidity from the more abstract to the historical, the third step is to consider the way in which identities shift from one field to another, giving some insight into how one might both be a Muslim and a devotee of Christian sacred site or vice versa. Therefore, to cover all of these factors we will proceed from identity as a broad construct, to the particular case of Turkey and conclude with a reflection on the fluidity of religious identity as it fluctuates by context, looking at shared pilgrimage spaces in particular.

A. The Theme of Identity Per Se

Self and Other

The study of identity is vast and has taken the scholarly foreground in recent decades. It has come to dominate much of what has been produced in the discourses emerging from post-modernism. Identity politics are significant in a number of societies and the subject has been explored in a variety of disciplines. In order to introduce the concept for use in analysis of shared pilgrimage, I propose to look at the perspective of Steph Lawler, senior lecturer in Sociology at Newcastle University, as her approach is the most coherent with the outlook presented here. A few major points are worth highlighting before proceeding into the notions of identity, differentiation and the particular case of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire that has shaped the relevant shared pilgrimage context(s). In order to approach this topic, I will focus on a few key aspects of identity theory. First, there is the dialectic between self and other, sameness and differentness (i.e. the self in relationship to those who are perceived to be both the same and other, in short).

'pre-Islamic elements'. Members of both the Sunni and Alevi clergy perform pilgrimage (*ziyaret*) there, maintaining the ritual limits of their respective traditions. It was reported to me by one of the caretaker priests that when Sunni imams visit, they generally simply enter the house and make an invocation (*du'a*) with upraised hands.

There is speculation and disagreement about the root of the term 'identity'. Here the assumption is that the word identity comes from the Latin *idem* meaning 'the same', inherently, etymologically drawing attention to the paradox of identity as simultaneously articulating sameness and differentness.⁵³⁹ A dialectic is proposed by Ricoeur to refine an understanding of self and identity, though distinguishing the two via the differing etymologies of *idem* and *ipse* as fundamental. Here I will simply say that the notion of identity as *idem* is interestingly paradoxical because it suggests that identity is about labelling the self in concert with others who are the same. Thus selfness is defined by sameness in this case, despite the usual Western (particularly North American) cultural assumption of identity as unique and independent being. Yet, of course, at one level of this episteme, it is clearly the case that identity entails identification with those who show similar characteristics of nationhood, religion, appearance, ideology or any number of factors. At another simultaneous level of identification, the emphasis is on *ipseity* or 'selfness' (according to Ricoeur's thesis⁵⁴⁰) which identifies one's subjective being by stressing differentness. Commenting on Ricoeur, Lawler summarises by stating that,

'The root of the word "identity" is the Latin *idem* (same) from which we also get 'identical'. One important meaning of the term, then, rests on the idea that not only are we identical with ourselves (that is, the same being from birth to death) but we are identical with others. That is, we share common identities...At the same time, however, there is another aspect of identity, which suggests people's uniqueness, their difference from others. Western notions of identity rely on these two modes of understanding, so that people are understood as being simultaneously the same and different.'⁵⁴¹

In order to clarify the 'I am' who is also 'we' (we who are all the same and thus share 'idem', identity) distinction must also be

⁵³⁹ K. BLAMEY (tran.): P. RICOEUR: *Oneself as Another* (Chicago 1992) 2.

⁵⁴⁰ RICOEUR: *Oneself as Another*, 3.

⁵⁴¹ S. LAWLER: *Identity: Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge 2008) 2.

made with those who are outside the collective 'I'. This is not particularly easy, despite differences in language and religion and indeed especially when one of these significant differences is missing, leading to what Freud called the 'narcissism of small differences' as seen in the hostile constructions of identity between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and in other conflicted settings.⁵⁴² That is to say that there is a fundamental tension within identity on the axis of sameness in distinction with differentness. In those circumstances within which there is immense social and state tension, spilling over into war, there is a tendency to exacerbate horribly the differences between communities by constructing rigid and eternally valid Ur-identities that justify the distinction of 'us' and 'them', focusing on the polemical *idem*, a 'narcissism of small differences' that makes the violent employment of alterity possible. Of course, with identity theory being a topic of great scholarly interest in the past decades, partly in response to these developments, a number of other etymologies have emerged for the term identity, with alternative lines of thought.

Multiple Identities

The sense of self and community identity can vary greatly, variously reconstellating and reconstituting itself in any number of cultures. For example, when seeking out a third party to look at much of the research already presented here, I was fortunate to receive the comments of a Turkish woman, a practicing Muslim from the Black Sea area currently living in the US. Sezen described herself as someone who had not grown up with non-Muslims but rather that it was not until she left her village and moved to the UK temporarily that she came to know Christians, Jews and other Non-Muslims. Amongst her reactions to my work, she identified herself and also those who I had interviewed by region and level of interaction with Non-Muslims. Her sense of identification and difference was one that varied from within a Turkish and Muslim context, itself internally diversified by geography and local culture. She pointed out that, for example, the Church of Saint Antoine, which attracts large numbers of Turkish

⁵⁴² LAWLER: *Identity*, 4.

pilgrims, was in the Pera neighbourhood of Istanbul that had historically been, she said 'the city of the Non-Muslims' and that, therefore, such practices as shared pilgrimage would be more prominent there. This leads to the following point, that, not only are identities relational but they are multiple. In the case of Sezen's comments, we see the above and this further element coming together.

Lawler states:

'no one has only one identity, in the sense that everyone must, consciously or not, identify with more than one group, one identity. As several feminist writers have commented, identities impact on one another ... race, gender and the rest interact (as do all forms of identity), so that to be a white woman is not the same – in terms of meaning or experience – as to be a black woman. Different forms of identity, then, should be seen as interactive and mutually constitutive, rather than 'additive'. They should also be seen as dynamic...'⁵⁴³

With this in mind, then, let us take the examples again of Sezen's comments on Istanbulites and our main case in Ephesus, currently found in the area of metropolitan Izmir another city sometimes identified as having a strong non-Muslim presence despite that historical reality being now many decades past (perhaps also in part because of its current reputation as a city of secular Turks). First, Sezen flags the multiplicity of the 'us and them' that constitute Turkish society, which is not internally monolithic. She points out that not only are Muslims from a different city and region likely to have cultural and religious habits that are distinct, but even the borough they live in, within the city of Istanbul, marks them. These are a multiplicity of identities within the same culture and within the same city. While I did not interview any Turkish devotee of St. Antoine's church who spoke directly of having a family tradition linked to the place, some did speak of such traditions in other locations and Sezen indicated that

⁵⁴³ LAWLER: *Identity*, 3.

long residence in the central Pera district (now called Beyoğlu) would incline one to have had relationships with Non-Muslims and, therefore, their rituals. Indeed, one interviewee said that his Turkish Istanbulite father was of a generation and class that would have been more formal and *adab*-oriented, using traditional Ottoman forms of address 'Effendi Bey' (Revered Sir) and which would have been so integrated with the local Greek population as to be almost indistinguishable in certain aspects. Similarly, many observers of the Population Exchange reference the reluctance of many Greeks to see Anatolian Greek refugees as truly of the same lineage, describing them as 'baptised in yoghurt' or 'seeds of Turks' (i.e. too 'oriental' or Turkified) for example.⁵⁴⁴ The pattern that Sezen references, therefore, repeats in many places. What remains consistent is a local phenomenon of a unique identity manifestation, one that defies the larger picture of what a Greek, Turk, Arab or anyone else 'should be'. To identify is to open ones claim to contestation or query from outside, as pointed out by Frederik Barth in his text 'Ethnic Groups and boundaries, in which he mentions that Pathans in Southern Pakistan have a history of contesting the authentic Pathaness of fellow tribe members in the Swat valley.⁵⁴⁵ Both Greeks and Turks that were exchanged in the wake of the Lausanne Treaty encountered intense discourses and systems of power endeavouring to deal with their perceived non-conformity to the norms of the Ethno-religious community that they were expected to belong to and settle into. Indeed, religious and ethnic changes were even formally institutionalised as Turkish speaking Orthodox Christians were taught to speak Greek and Muslim migrants from Greece took the step of converting from Alevi-Bektashi to Sunni Islam in order to be more acceptable to the mainstream of Turkish Muslim society.⁵⁴⁶ The 'construction' of identity, as a concept, need not be confused with the very grounded reality that such structures engender. The construction is indeed not as ephemeral or virtually non-existent as the term's place in the linguistic field would seem to subtly connote.

⁵⁴⁴ B. CLARK: *Twice a Stranger: How Mass Expulsion Formed Modern Greece and Turkey* (London 2006) 32.

⁵⁴⁵ F. BARTH: *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Boston 1969).

⁵⁴⁶ B. CLARK: *Twice a Stranger*, 187-190.

Self, then, is identified in relation to others and with consequences. Drawing on Heidegger, anthropologists Monaghan and Just, professors at Vanderbilt University and Williams College, respectively, make the following observation:

At their core, communities command an identification and allegiance that is rooted in the shared history and shared experience of its members, an experience of place and a celebration of what the German philosopher Martin Heidegger called 'homeliness'. Allegiance to one's home or region, while lacking the ideology of shared blood implicit in ethnicity, may entail a sense that one is profoundly shaped by one's surroundings and anyone who share's those surroundings is similarly shaped. A sense of place can be extraordinarily powerful, as among the Western Apache, where particular features of the landscape are named to encode powerful moral lessons. As Durkheim predicted, collective representations are often crucial to creating feelings of solidarity in larger communities that are otherwise highly fractionalized.⁵⁴⁷

That is to say that an important element of understanding identity comes with a branching out from not only the individual to the community but from the community to the lived space(s) and landscape(s) in which it embedded.

Returning to our main case, it is not difficult to see the way in which this relates to some of what has already been covered, in terms of the House of the Virgin as a signifier within the symbolic and physical landscape of Western Anatolia. In Maria Couroucli's work on the Christian festivals followed by Muslims on the Prince's Island in Istanbul, she makes just this point, that both Turks and Greeks create around these particular times and places the tradition of their coexistence as intertwined communities, not by blood but by 'allegiance to one's home or region' as mentioned above.⁵⁴⁸ A variety of ways for umbrella identities to exist and

⁵⁴⁷ J. MONAGHAN and P. JUST: *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford 2000) 101-102.

⁵⁴⁸ D. ALBERA and B. FLICHOT: 'Les Pratiques devotionelles', 188-189.

thrive have been observed, including joint allegiance to a shared historical religious or mythic figure as we have earlier discussed in terms of religious imagination.

Couroucli deals with the identities of Istanbulites as highlighted by their relationship to Christian-Muslim shared pilgrimage sites (Eyup Sultan mosque and shrine, St Antoine Church, St. George Church in the Prince's Islands). What she notes that is of particular interest here is that all involved have multiple identities in the sense that they are not simply Istanbulites, nor simply Greeks, Christians, Muslims, or Turks but a combination of all of the above. As such, from another angle, she is making a very similar comment to that of her Turkish counterpart, Sezen (my fieldwork respondent) who emphasised not so much the meta-identities of Turks but the local identities that form part of the habitus and self-conception of those who live in this cosmopolitan capital which still retains some evidence of its former multi-religiosity. Couroucli points out that whereas both Istanbulites and immigrants from the east may share a Turkishness as an umbrella identity, Turks from the east tend to only go to mosques, unlike the Turks of Istanbul who, from a more indigenous perspective, know the ins and outs of the city's local (basic) sacrality, one of churches, mosques, synagogues and Sufi shrines. As such, unlike relative newcomers to the city, those from older families will generally be the ones to join Greeks and Armenians (as the two prime examples) in their holy places.⁵⁴⁹ As Sezen has also pointed out, the Turk from the centre of Istanbul shares things in common with her or his non-Muslim neighbours not shared with other Turks and, simultaneously shares an identity with recent immigrants not shared with Non-Muslim neighbours of longstanding.

As such, we can confirm the observations of Lawler, Monaghan and Just which, in these cases, interestingly coincide. First, it is indeed the case that identities are multiple but not additive as such. That is to say that a Turkish Muslim of Istanbul operates out of all these apparently solid identities and none can be entirely separated. Similarly, my respondents in the towns around

⁵⁴⁹ COUROUCLI: 'Sharing Nostalgia in Istanbul', 4.

historical Ephesus articulated a number of identities. They were secular, Muslim, Turkish, with roots in Greece and a life lived in the Westernised world of Aegean Turkey and cosmopolitan Izmir. Echoing Lawler, none of my respondents identified him or herself as 'just Muslim', 'just a Turk with roots in Greece' or 'just a person from Izmir' although the emphasis could shift depending on the context, just as Katerina's mother might operate out of differing discourses and identities at varying times and circumstances. In their encounter with the House of the Virgin they contribute a particularly local knowledge and attitude to an otherwise international shrine. They bring their stories and their localness because, unlike many who are visiting, they have grown up visiting the location, bringing with them their own personal and family histories which have made them sensitive to the issues of sharing, space, ritual, ownership and religious identity that became so pronounced in the lifetimes of their parents and grandparents. Shared pilgrimage has this pronouncedly local character, something not immediately noticeable when arriving at the House and witnessing hundreds of pilgrims and tourists from as far as Japan or Latin America.

As Monaghan and Just have pointed out, Heidegger's concepts are of help. Identity is not simply a label, a kind of linguistic construction or a concept of use to governments and institutions, but a phenomenon fundamentally of place and identification with landscape and home. As Monaghan and Just have pointed out, this identification is an intersection and confluence of elements, the 'shared history and shared experience of its members, an experience of place and a celebration of what the German philosopher Martin Heidegger called "homeliness".' It has been my observation that many of my interviewees from Turkey saw Meryem Ana Evi, for example, as part of their tradition, their landscape and, ultimately their identity. As Couroucli rightly points out shared pilgrimage in Istanbul corresponds to a sense of being not just Muslim or Turkish but also 'from Istanbul' and thus sharing in an identification with the significant spaces of the city, officially Muslim or not.

Self Through Story

The narrational aspect of identity is another element that is very central to its exposition. Here I intend to look at identity as both communal in its references (as above) and as also imbricated in narrative, although it would also be possible to examine a more individual form of identity as a product of and productive of narrative. The scope of this project allows for both but here I will place more emphasis on the communal, temporarily. In order to approach the issue of the communal narrative that forms identity, particularly in traditional culture, I wish to emphasise a few key points that are previous to this analysis as important assumptions: First, identity hinges on the narration of the self and community in their many contexts, expressing a history, a landscape and a tradition, in most cases. Identity in all its complexity is explained in story as Lawler points out, quoting Sommer and Gibson:

‘Stories guide action; people construct identities (however multiple and changing) by locating themselves or being located within a repertoire of emplotted stories...experience is constituted through narratives...’⁵⁵⁰

This narration is a mediation of experience that guides and gives meaning to a collection of memories, which may or may not naturally cohere but which do, generally, in the narrative that the community constructs. Lawler says that there is no ‘unmediated access to the “facts of the matter”’ and that the process of interpretation is on-going ‘in the light of a person’s knowledge and understanding’.⁵⁵¹

The establishment of a sense of self through community inevitably travels through the path of communal narrative with the narrative’s polemical viewpoint making the pivotal difference in terms of the communal effect, be it conflictive or reconciliatory. One need only look at, for example, the effects of the Balkan myth

⁵⁵⁰ SOMERS and GIBSON: Reclaiming the Epistemological ‘other’: narrative and the social constitution of identity in C. CALHOUN (ed): *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity* (Cambridge 1994) 38-39.

⁵⁵¹ S. LAWLER: *Identity*, 18.

of 'Heavenly Serbia'⁵⁵² or the traditional narrative placing the Tutsis as ancient immigrants to Rwanda from Ethiopia or Egypt, unlike the 'less civilised' Hutu and Twa tribes, known as the 'Hamitic Myth'⁵⁵³ which stand in contrast to the edenic past scenarios that we have examined in, for example the Malerkotla post-partition discourse and the narratives of monotheistic coexistence in Al-Andalus which are increasingly of interest. The effects of such narratives on conflict has been of interest in recent years, particularly in the field of conflict resolution, political science and among Post-Modernists and Post-Colonial theorists interested in the notion of 'nostalgia for origins'. There has been a turn recently, however, to a critique of the critique of myths of origin, however, seeking to see them from a new angle, asking whether they are also of positive use, in some circumstances.⁵⁵⁴

Again, the dark side of this phenomenon is what has been, rightly, highlighted. Violent and tense contestation 'takes place' where defining of self and other through difference (the narcissism of small or perhaps large differences) the defining of self through community and the defining of self through narrative have played out. While we have positive examples like Ephesus, we simultaneously can point to those locations whose multireligiosity is much more problematic, places which are not 'shared pilgrimage' sites as such but which have certainly attracted the attention of more than one religious community, in mild terms. Besides the obvious examples of the Holy Land and those earlier mentioned, there is the consummate case of Ayodhya in India, where conflicting narratives, ritual and definition of self through distinguishing from the other have run their course to a very tense

⁵⁵² For further discussion of the role of this narrative in the Balkan genocides of the 90s, see B. ANZULOVIC: *Heavenly Serbia: From Myth to Genocide* (New York 1999).

⁵⁵³ S. SAHA: 'Primal Violence or the Politics of Conviction? Perspective On Contemporary Ethnic Conflict', in P. MAGNARELLA: *The Hutu-Tutsi Conflict in Rwanda* (Oxford 2006) 113-114.

⁵⁵⁴ S. TANNOCK: 'Nostalgia Critique', in *Cultural Studies* 9:3 (1995) 453 – 464.

end leading to a resurgence of the Hindu right.⁵⁵⁵ In this case one sees how, in the 1990s, the Hindu right asserted its own narrative through spatial and ritual acts, building a temple by destroying the Babri Masjid, a mosque which was believed to have been built by the Moghul conqueror Babur Shah, over the birthplace of the Hindu deity Ram, himself an archetypal warrior and symbol of triumph in Hindu lore, a case of clashing virtual-imaginal worlds, spaces, histories, narratives and ritual acting-in-space.

What one also finds, in the case of mixed and shared pilgrimage phenomena, is a reversed but equally constructed positive nostalgia and narrative of coexistence, often in defiance of the evidence to the contrary or counter-histories, as previously pointed out in the examples from Post-Partition India in the village of Malerkotla.⁵⁵⁶ As in Ephesus, this shrine creates an encounter of identity that is touted as harmonious with all of the same elements that contribute to the more conflict-ridden cases. There is a more harmonious use of space, edenic narrative, theological discourse and imaginal-virtual overlapping of significant figures such as Sufi saints (Malerkotla) and the Virgin Mary (Ephesus) who are flexibly incorporated into an 'outside' traditions (i.e. Haider Sheikh into the lives of Sikh and Hindu Believers, the Virgin Mary into Turkish Muslim lived religion) world, taking up residence within its identity-image-field. Indeed a visitor to the House of the Virgin from the Netherlands remarked to me that she was struck by the degree to which the Turks see the church as 'theirs', as an important part of the *Turkish* landscape.

Here again we see the element of reading the past into the present as seen in many shared pilgrimage locations, Ephesus and the Anatolian examples being no exceptions, of course. During interviews with Turks about Ephesus and ambiguous sanctuaries,

⁵⁵⁵ Regarding the controversial of history of Ayodhya as city with Hindu, Muslim and other claims, which lead to a mosque being publically destroyed and turned into a Hindu Temple, see the Chapter 'Ritual as Confrontation: The Ayodhya Conflict' by Jan Platvoet of Leiden University in J. PLATOVET and K. VAN DE TOORN: *Pluralism and Identity, Studies in Ritual Behaviour* (Leiden 1995).

⁵⁵⁶ BIGELOW: 'Saved By the Saint', 1, 437-441.

whether in the environs of Ephesus in the Izmir metropolitan area or in Istanbul, the discussion would generally move towards the history of communal relationships in Turkey and the experience of the interviewee's family in the context of neighbouring non-Muslims, in addition to what, if any, connection their family had to the visiting of both the Islamic and Christian holy places of their environment. I would put forward the notion that, according to my own interviews and the work of others such as F.W. Hasluck, there need not be a particularly strong articulated 'interfaith' or 'intercommunal' element to motivate believers to participate in shared pilgrimage. None of my interviewees said that they or their relatives went to Meryem Ana Evi to make any particularly ecumenical statement, however much their presence there would indicate a basic openness to being in the sacred spaces of other communities. Instead, the answers revolved around a devotion for the figure honoured in the place (the Virgin Mary/ Hazret Meryem in Ephesus in the majority of the cases in my own field work) with theological and Koranic justifications or more pragmatic explanation; Prayers are believed to be answered for particular petitions and concerns at a given location, regardless of whether it is a Christian shrine or an Islamic *turbe*.

While these were the answers in the realm of 'motivation' there was an imbrication within another discourse, one that we have previously mentioned, not focused on religion or ritual, as such, that focuses on largely positive associations with the shared Ottoman past, or in the case of one of my interviewees, the story of his Turkish family saving Greek orphans. In either case, but particularly in the former, there is this quality of what Herzfeld has called, 'the collective representation of an Edenic order – a time before time...' in which relationships grew up in a more ideal and, often, a less homogenous, more interdependent multicultural golden era.⁵⁵⁷

Having established both that there is no unmediated experience and that experience is formulated into plots and narratives, it is also useful to note that both are read back into

⁵⁵⁷ HERZFELD: *Cultural Intimacy*, 109.

earlier experiences and narratives for their formation. Commenting on Kierkegaard who famously said, 'Life is lived forwards but understood backwards', Lawler says:

"...But it might be better to see life as being both lived and understood forwards and backwards in a 'spiral movement' of constant interpretation and reinterpretation. People constantly produce and reproduce life stories on the basis of memories, interpreting the past through the lens of social information, and using this information to formulate present and future life stories."⁵⁵⁸

Observing what most of those I interviewed in Turkey regarding Ephesus articulated about the relationship of their various Muslim and secular communities to the city and site, the emergent pattern of comments could be narrowed to chief statements of representation: 'we share many, though not all, of the same beliefs' and 'we have a history of living together, one that is far from altogether bad'. Indeed, as Lawler point out, this is a recipe for the future and not simply a way of constructing the past. As there continue to be occasional disputes between Turkey and Greece, particularly around Cyprus, issues between Turkey and the West (perceived to be a Christian community, even in EU accession debates) and because the weight of history between these nations is such that it does not simply evaporate, the story of Ephesus and other locations as places demonstrative of a kind of *communitas* at a wider level, is useful for many who, explicitly or not, are attempting to construct more positive for the future, regardless of whether identity politics have led to positive outcomes in the past. That attempt to articulate something positive for the future by way of looking into a shared past or shared belief, is not an unusual or rare phenomenon, particularly where the need for such constructions of share identity is charged with a sense of urgency.

⁵⁵⁸ LAWLER: *Identity*, 19.

B. Filling the Vacuum of Identity Narrative

At times, there is a lack of narrative on hand within the culture to satisfy the 'nostalgia for origins' or the need for a communal identity between the divided. The need for this narrative is met, often, with a new but traditionally based construction, particularly when the necessity is a pressing one. I have previously pointed out that most shared pilgrimage sites venerate a particular sacred figure, an archetype. While perhaps this may seem obvious, it does indeed connect to a number of implications that must be unfolded. While it is clear that there is an overlap of features between the given figures attracting shared pilgrimage and that these are significant to the very key imaginal component within religious tradition, there is a corollary that is significant to the study of identity: This is the fact that historical and mythic-archetypal figures command communal allegiance and are thus employed with great consistency across a number of societies and political and religious systems. One need only think of the Statue of Liberty, any notable sovereign, living or dead, or the ubiquitous images of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Mao Tse Tong, or Eva Peron. This is not to mention the an-iconic representations of the Prophet Muhammed in calligraphy found in virtually every mosque (plus literary descriptions of his appearance and life)⁵⁵⁹ and the general power of religious personages and symbols. A great deal of *communitas* is created by rallying political and religious belief around shared archetypes, historical persons and, of course, more abstract symbols such as flags. Here we will examine more closely, however the archetypal cores of identity and how they are relevant to identity-space-imaginings, building on my previous work and that of others. In some cases the construction of identity is via a shared history surrounding a common historical figure (Indonesia) and in other cases a highly public ritualisation of a shared figure (Lebanon).

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The traditional biographies of the Prophet are known as 'Sirah' literature and the description of the Prophet's physical appearance or 'Hilya Sharif' is found, for example, in the classical Islamic text: 'The Guide to Goodness' by Imam Jazuli. A number of versions are available in a variety of languages.

One of the most interesting and illustrative examples of the conscious construction of identity through a shared historical/religious figure is that of the Chinese Muslim community in Indonesia and its retracing of its origins to a man by the name of Cheng Ho who, in the fourteenth century, is said to have brought a Chinese Islam, as it were, to Indonesia, being the founder of the Chinese community there.⁵⁶⁰ Interestingly, however, those Muslims who have identified with him as the 'ancestor' of their community are of the dominant, majority Non-Muslim Han Chinese community, while Cheng Ho himself was of the historically Muslim Hui community, with its ancient narratives of origin outside of historical 'China', in the Middle East and Central Asia.⁵⁶¹ Outside observers would tend to find this curious as an identity marker among recently converted Han (not Hui) Chinese, an ethnic group with a tradition of considering Islam to be a marker of Indonesianess and, therefore, inferiority, according to Chion Suen-Yuan.⁵⁶² It remains to explain this constructive approach to identity and in what ways it sheds light on the use of a place like Meryem Ana Evi in official and unofficial discourse about relationships between 'Muslims and Christians', "the East and the West" and similar discursive lines. In order to do this, I will briefly outline this Indonesian case.

The context for the development of this figure is illuminative in terms of its usefulness as a symbol of local interconnectedness. Following the end of the Suharto regime in Indonesia, there was a greater and greater urgency for the integration of the Han Chinese minority into the mainstream of Indonesian society. One of the outgrowths of this movement was an organisation for Chinese Muslims known as the Association of Chinese Muslims of Indonesia which sought to educate and integrate Chinese into the Muslim community in Indonesia by, somewhat paradoxically, constructing an identity for the Chinese Muslim locating her or

⁵⁶⁰ C. SYUEN YUAN: 'Building Traditions for Bridging Differences: Islamic Imaginary Homelands of Chinese-Indonesian Muslims in East Java', in C. KWOK-BUN, J. WALLS and D. HAYWARD (eds) *East-West Identities: Globalization, Localization, and Hybridization* (Leiden 2007) 265-278.

⁵⁶¹ YUAN: 'Building Traditions', 270-273.

⁵⁶² YUAN: 'Building Traditions', 273.

him within an Islam that is authentically Chinese, with an historical lineage.⁵⁶³ Cheng Ho is a useful 'communal ancestor' from an 'imagined homeland' because he is already a figure 'worshipped', in fact, by many Chinese and Javanese.⁵⁶⁴ The Association of Chinese Muslims was established to both generate discourse around Chinese Muslim identity and also to educate Han Chinese converting to Islam.⁵⁶⁵ Besides making the Chinese Muslim, the organization makes Chinese Muslims a part of an Indonesian story (the voyage of Cheng Ho) that is simultaneously a narrative of Chineseness and Muslimness (however much the Chineseness might seemed forced from some ethnic viewpoints). The figure of Cheng Ho was so important to the organisation that a mural with images of his life was erected in the Chinese Muslim centre run by the Association of Chinese Muslims in East Java, an unusual practice within a mosque.⁵⁶⁶ Further, Non-Muslims revere Cheng Ho (who is said to have contributed financially to Taoist and Buddhist temples) and have even erected images of him for worship in temples throughout Malaysia and Indonesia.⁵⁶⁷

Thus, a common ancestor (revered by Muslims and Non-Muslims) from a distant time period, who was not ethnically Han Chinese, has gone through a process of elevation and, almost, archetypilisation, as a figure who represents the heritage of an entire community of Han Chinese Muslims who are neither in blood nor direct religious lineage descent from him (as they are recent converts and not Hui). It has been my observation that the House of the Virgin Mary at times takes on a similar discourse about the common heritage of Christians and Muslims as religious communities that converge around the figure of the Virgin Mary

⁵⁶³ YUAN: 'Building Traditions', 273.

⁵⁶⁴ YUAN: 'Building Traditions', 269 ('worshipped' is a term used by Yuan. Presumably there is an interesting explanation for the process by which a Muslim from China came to be worshipped). He attributes the term 'imagined homeland' to Salman Rushdie.

⁵⁶⁵ YUAN: 'Building Traditions', 269.

⁵⁶⁶ YUAN: 'Building Traditions', 269.

⁵⁶⁷ 'A Peaceful Mariner and Diplomat' Xinhua News Agency, 12 July, 2005, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/zhenhe/134661.htm>, accessed electronically 8 September, 2010.

despite differing theologies, as if to create something of a common identity around a common figure. I have previously discussed this as an imaginative phenomenon. To the degree, however, that this is a question of answering a certain tension (one that seems recently to have been on the increase) about the inevitability of clash between the East and West, Christianity and Islam, there is a significant social point here, one which becomes very clear through an exploration of the popular media about the House of the Virgin Mary in Ephesus, that I find to be unparalleled amongst shared pilgrimage sites. Whereas the Old City of Jerusalem is invoked as the quintessential flashpoint of religious division and the Balkans have even become metonymical when speaking of religious conflict (e.g. the term 'Balkanisation'), Ephesus has taken on the opposite signification amongst those, like the late orientalist Louis Massignon, visiting Popes and everyday visitors who see its potential multi-religious meaning.

What is key for this argument is the fact that such 'building traditions to bridge differences' (as Yuan aptly names his article) is not actually about creating a new tradition as such, instead it is a way of demonstrating through narrative (Indonesia) or ritual (Lebanon) that a given community can coexist with another because in their deeper 'origins', they are already connected, even if not necessarily the same. Indeed, the emphasising of a Muslim Chinese presence in Indonesia does not make Chinese Muslims the same as Indonesians but, instead, it places them, with their own unique history and place but within the context of Indonesian culture, a position that appeared to be amenable for all sides, according to the Association. Identity is simultaneously sameness and differentness as per Lawler, Monaghan, Just and others.

Similarly, the Lebanese government, at the behest of a group including a Muslim cleric working at a Catholic University has successfully promoted a day of Islamic-Christian solidarity in Lebanon, on the day of the Annunciation, March 25. On this day, now an official national holiday, Sheikh Nokkari has coordinated that there be ritual space and interreligious soundscape on the day, with images of the Virgin Mary including a very pronounced crescent moon and the merging in sound of the Ave Maria with the

Adhan (Islamic call to prayer) in Martyr's Square, Beirut, footage of which can be seen archived on the internet.⁵⁶⁸

One need only further do an internet search on 'House of the Virgin Mary, Ephesus' to find a brief but consistent theme that has developed into a history and discourse within, particularly, the travel industry, among other arenas. A review of electronic media and tourism literature shows the area to be identified chiefly by its ancient and religious character as the site of the former city of Ephesus, home of the Artemision and one of the world's most important archaeological sites. It is equally described as the place where the Virgin Mary lived out her last days. The two main themes are, then historical-archaeological and religious. Of these two, the religious narrative seems to predominate with either purely Christian topics to draw pilgrims, or a commentary on the ecumenical nature of the Muslim and Christian crowds that share the place (there is no mention of noisy, irreverent tourists, of course!).⁵⁶⁹

It should come as no surprise then that, like Indonesian Muslims, another group has taken up the idea of constructing shared identity by telling a common story but, in this case drawing on the common archetypal significance of Sayiddina Meryem/the Virgin Mary. Sheikh Nokkari of St. Joseph's University in Beirut is a specialist in the field of Muslim-Christian issues and has focused on the understandably very urgent need in Lebanon (note the repetition of circumstances with post-Suharto Indonesia) to use

⁵⁶⁸ 'Christians, Muslims United in Celebrating Annunciation', An-Nahar, Lebanese Newspaper, Beirut 25 March, 2010 <http://www.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/Lebanon/A05E8BCB0A4AEF05C22576F1002831A7?OpenDocument> (electronic version accessed 8 September, 2010) concert film footage: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQTpsqhG_0A&feature=player_embedded#!, and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q25fAkpXchk&feature=related> (accessed 8 September, 2010).

⁵⁶⁹ See, for example: About Kusadasi: <http://www.aboutkusadasi.com/ephesus/virgin-mary-house.html> (accessed 24, April, 2010) or <http://www.ephesus.us/ephesus/houseofvirginmary.htm> (May 7, 2010).

religion for an increasingly stable civil-tribal identity that draws on religious identity but does not encourage sectarianism (in the Indonesian case, an identity that does not encourage ethnic strife). This is a very consciously formed identification of one ethno-religious community with another specifically tying together groups who have constructed themselves more sharply on difference and binary opposition than on sameness, at least in the context of conflict (and indeed context is in a fluctuation that parallels the fluctuation of identities in contact with one another: the discourses of 'we have always been at peace' vs. 'we have always been at war').

The Lebanese religious establishment is not alone in this, as we have seen also in the case of Louis Massignon who sought to construct something of a Muslim-Christian cultus around the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus in both Algeria and France as an opportunity to create a powerful *communitas* between French Christians and Algerian Muslims that would indeed be maintained all the way through the Franco-Algerian conflict, as previously mentioned.⁵⁷⁰ Ephesus as a city of shared pilgrimage, as the place of the Virgin Mary's House and the resting place of the Seven Sleepers (Christian/Monotheist martyrs for whom an entire chapter of the Koran is named)⁵⁷¹ was seen by Massignon as an ideal archetypal space of engagement which could be drawn upon as a theme for the sort of *communitas* and shared identity that he intended to focus upon a greater solidarity not just between Christians and Muslims but between the French and Algerians specifically. To this end, Massignon focused on developing a local rite in France drawing on this semiotic of shared religious identity. What developed was a pilgrimage both Breton Catholic (known as a *pardon*) and Islamic in theme and ritual, an incorporation of both at the Chapel of the Seven

⁵⁷⁰ C. BARTHOLOMEW and F. HUGHES: *Explorations in a Christian Theology of Pilgrimage*, 130-134.

⁵⁷¹ A number of sources have commented on the diverse forms taken by Islamic traditions that invoke the Seven Sleepers in a variety of sacred places and under varying circumstances. See: HASLUCK: *Christianity and Islam*, 312-316 and J. STASSINET: *YouakimMoubarac* (Paris 2005) 171-176.

Sleepers (also known as the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus) at Vieux Marché, Brittany.

Massignon's daughter, folklorist and linguist Dr. Genevieve Massignon, in 1963, described the ritual gathering, a remembrance of the saints of Ephesus, and its satellite pilgrimages in the following terms:

Every year since 1954 a Muslim delegation formed specifically of North African labourers coming from areas around Paris, joins with the crowds of traditional pilgrims from Brittany in order to go across the moors to the old sanctuary surrounded by chestnut trees. The evening before, preceded by a banner where one reads phrases of angelic greetings in Arabic letters -- common in the Qur'an and in the Hail Mary -- the Muslims joined in the procession leading to the *tantad* or fire of joy, a ceremony marking every 'pardon' or traditional pilgrimage in Brittany.

This Muslim-Christian event ends with a *diffa* offered by the Muslim delegation, where couscous is served with a lamb slaughtered according to the ritual of Abraham...

During painful periods of conflict, the Algerian friends of Professor Massignon returned, at the peril of their lives, to the spring at Guidjel near to Sétif (in Algeria) in order to join in the prayers of the pilgrims in Brittany. Thus the devotion itself to the Seven Saints of Ephesus joins together the hopes of believers in two religions, like the devotion to the Virgin at Panaya Kapulu near Ephesus, where every year this sanctuary receives the homage of dozens of thousands of pilgrims, the majority of whom are Muslims.⁵⁷²

⁵⁷² G. MASSIGNON: The Veneration of the Seven Sleepers: a devotion common to Christians and Muslims, *Sufi Magazine* (London 2005) <http://www.dcbuck.com/Articles/Pilgrimage/Pilgrimage.html> (6 July, 2011).

Other sources also make mention of recitations of the Sura of the Cave (named after the Seven Sleepers 'of the cave') and iconography being employed in this ritual project of the famous French scholar. Shared symbols, archetypes and spaces can converge to the alleged benefit of a society seeking social cohesion by attempting to create, ultimately, shared identity and *communitas*. The examples are so numerous and so key amongst the tools of social scientists, politicians and other who take on the issue of violence and the fracturing of the modern nation-state that a number of similar lineages have been traced even as far as the effect of football rituals on communal harmony in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the post-war era.⁵⁷³

I draw attention to this for the important reason that it clarifies one aspect of shared pilgrimage: Importantly, shared pilgrimage is not always entirely spontaneous, growing out of a practical need for miracles or a profound devotion for a shared figure that transcends (or incorporates) the boundaries of two or more religious traditions. Rather, a shared pilgrimage (or discourse of sharing) can be crafted for the purpose of creating communal harmony as in Massignon's work in Brittany or the Annunciation Day festivities in Beirut. In most cases, these traditions are possible because of a basic coalescence of narrative around a figure from the venerable past, as in the Indonesian example. The House of the Virgin Mary seems to function both spontaneously as a place of grassroots devotional practice and within more conscious discourse production. The staff of the House has in fact devised its own holiday known as the 'Feast of Fruits' to accommodate both Muslims and Christians within a ceremony that is not the full rite of the Mass. The House of the Virgin appears in the work of those who consciously wish to construct a discourse of coexistence and simultaneously it occupies a devotional space in which its co-ritualisation is often not motivated by ecumenical discourses so much as by a more fundamental belief and

⁵⁷³ D. STERCHELE: 'The Limits of Inter-religious Dialogue and the Form of Football Rituals: The Case of Bosnia-Herzegovina' in *Social Compass* 54 (2007) 211.

reverence, as seen in the range of motivations that I have encountered in the field.

C. Identity in Recent Turkish History: Shifting Identities, Shifting States

Faruk Birtek of Bogazici University in Istanbul has contributed an interesting theory of the development of Turkish identity within its own highly multi-religious and multi-ethnic milieu, focusing particularly on the wave of change beginning with the Tanzimat reform of the late Ottoman empire and more clearly solidifying after the invasion of Turkey by Greece in the 1920s. Because we have already examined something of the role of this last war with Greece as significant both in theory and in the field, it is useful to look at the way that identity expressed along religious lines has shifted in recent Turkish history. This in turn can help us understand the fluidity of praxis which exists in the shared shrines of Turkey, all of which come from an era in which identity was articulated somewhat differently than what is most common currently in Turkey.

According to Birtek, modern Turkish identity is founded not only on the end of the Ottoman Empire but on the particular circumstances of the repulsion of the Greek and European invasion, not so much in terms of an anti-Greek nationalism as what he calls a 'mobilisational identity'. That is to say, that the circumstances of the war were such that a new identity was formed as the Turkish and Muslim Anatolian peoples were forced to forge a common cause and develop a new identity outside that of the decayed Ottoman state. The Sultan himself had, in fact, insisted that the population not resist the Greek occupation, effectively surrendering to both the Greeks and the Western powers. The new identity that came to occupy the centre of discourse from this point on would be that put forward by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the leader who successfully kept the nation intact, the last Muslim power to not fall to the West. Atatürk's mobilisation is the turning point which began to forge a new identity, one centred on survival in the face of Western hegemony through a radical shift from the

Ottoman's Islamic, multi-cultural and imperial model to a more monolithic notion of a specifically Turkish nationhood.⁵⁷⁴

Essentially, the occupation by Greek forces shattered the notion of a liberal style late Ottoman Empire that had come to see itself as multi-culturally democratic since the implementation of the Tanzimat Reforms in the Mid-19th century, which brought a lessening of control by the religious establishments of all the *millets* (communities) of the Ottoman Empire, Muslim, Jewish and Christian, creating a system in which these communities respective religious leaders were no longer in charge of administering all aspects of their community member's lives. It was then possible to access secular forms of education and legal justice, under the Reforms.⁵⁷⁵ These practical reforms were, in turn, ensconced in a greater ideological framework. As the 17th Century drew to a close, there was a growing awareness that the Ottoman Empire was slipping behind Russia and the Western powers.⁵⁷⁶ Seeing a need for reform in line with changing times, a number of changes were enacted with the signing of the Proclamation of the Rose Garden in November 1839, including a basic equality before the law for all citizens and a parallel civil law system, an alternative to the religious affiliation based system. This eventually led to Non-Muslims being allowed to serve in the Ottoman army, cease paying poll-tax and even bear arms.⁵⁷⁷

What Faruk Birtek puts forward is, however, that all of this is pivotal to the forming of what is now the modern Turkish identity in part because, as an interim system (which included modifications and pressures for change from competing groups, such as the 'Young Ottomans') it was not successful in creating a more holistic vision of the Ottoman Empire that would bring

⁵⁷⁴ F. BIRTEK: 'From Affiliation to Affinity: Citizenship in the Transition from Empire to Nation-State', in S. BENHABIB, I. SHAPIRO, D. PETRANOVIC: *Identities Affiliations and Allegiances* (Cambridge 2007) 17-19.

⁵⁷⁵ H. POULTON: *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (London 1997) 52-53.

⁵⁷⁶ POULTON: *Top Hat, Grey Wolf*, 52-53.

⁵⁷⁷ POULTON: *Top Hat, Grey Wolf*, 51.

together Muslims, Christians and Jews under one banner of a shared identity, completely. As we have previously seen, looking at identity through narrative, there is no experience which is immediate and able to be transmitted in a pure way, without mediation and interpretation. As such, it is difficult to generalise about the experience of entire communities and places, even without a significant time gap. Birtek, however, makes some observations based on significant events and what can be seen in the lives of particular Ottomans that are clarifying.⁵⁷⁸ Birtek points out that despite being a 'proto-typical Turk' it would not be unusual for someone such as himself to only have to look as far as the 19th century to see that his ancestors may have variously described themselves as Kurds, Albanians or Greeks (*Rum*) and yet simultaneously 'Ottoman':

'Another prototypical Turk of today might with equal ordinariness find his or her roots in some of the many other Ottoman groups...but almost never in a single ethnic background. Instead, their ancestors were always mixed, always intermarried, always on the go: converting and reconverting as they went along their history.'⁵⁷⁹

Much of this was taking place under an umbrella discourse of Ottomaness that, besides being multicultural and heading towards a greater inclusivity despite religious difference, was held as an ideal by many within the varying ethno-religious communities. That is to say that the image of the Ottoman as a sophisticated, cultured character was an elitist ideal for many, regardless of their ethnic or religious background, perhaps in the similar way to that of the archetypal English gentleman in places that had encountered British colonialism:

'For the nineteenth century Empire, the urban elitist sociocultural grammar of manners and mentality came to

⁵⁷⁸ He chooses to remain focused mostly on the Muslim and Non-Muslim elites, however, most likely because this is the most accessible information. A more subaltern focus on identity amongst working-class people in the late Ottoman world would also be of interest.

⁵⁷⁹ BIRTEK: 'From Affiliation to Affinity', 29.

define the core of the Ottoman public identity, and not religion or ethnicity. It was the urban society and the country elite that set the rules of citizenship. The remaining ethnic population was identified more in terms of their parochial ethnic and/or other communal moorings...The great part of the Ottoman success in the nineteenth century was the fine-tuning of the affiliational web within which the 'self' was anchored. And the direct identification of urbanity of manners and quality of style with the Ottomanist public identity...⁵⁸⁰

This was so much the case that some who opposed the empire might yet continue to use Ottomanness as synonymous, in a positive sense, with refinement and taste despite the rest of their discourse being one of opposition to the Ottoman political system, for example. Further, this identification of disparate groups with Ottomanism (or in this last example, *aspects* of Ottomanism) could lead to particularly interesting and seemingly (from a modern Western point of view) paradoxical circumstances. Two cases are particularly illustrative:

As the Tanzimat reforms came into effect, Non-Muslims were increasingly able to climb the political ladder of the empire, leading to unusual consequences. After the exit of the Ottoman Empire from Bulgaria in 1913, the Ottomans sought an agreement with the Bulgarian government regarding the status of Bulgaria's Islamic religious institutions, requiring that a high level delegation be sent which, incidentally, was lead by two ministers, one a Jew and the other a Greek. Upon further consideration, the cabinet decided that the scenario was too bizarre to be carried out and therefore decided to replace the Jewish minister with a Turkish Muslim, retaining the Greek negotiator on the basis that he would have the appropriate background to negotiate with Orthodox Christians.⁵⁸¹ In this last example there is some insight into the unusual web of

⁵⁸⁰ BIRTEK: 'From Affiliation to Affinity', 30. Here, of course, we are also talking about *adab*.

⁵⁸¹ BIRTEK: 'From Affiliation to Affinity', 32.

affiliations and identities of which Birttek speaks, in which a Christian might be in some ways more identified with the Ottoman state than with a co-religionist, with his or her religion being simply a helpful bargaining asset for a minister seen chiefly as a representative of the Ottoman state.

To take this scenario to its furthest manifestation, there is also the example of Constantine Mousurus Pasha who, as a member of the *Rum* community⁵⁸² saw himself as a loyal Ottoman and, indeed, represented the Ottoman state, demonstrating something of the cosmopolitan and urbane spirit of many Ottomans as an identity that stood in contrast to more localist, nationalist attitudes. So much was this the case that Mousurus Pasha went so far as to oppose a number of actions by the Greek government with public and censorious language, referring to Greece as an upstart 'little power' lacking in respect for the Ottoman 'superpower'. This contributed, most likely, to the resentments towards him in Greece that eventually lead to the attempt to take his life by nationalists while he was serving as Ottoman ambassador to Athens.⁵⁸³

However, the story does not stop here. As previously mentioned while examining the histories of fieldwork respondents, the Greek government made the decision to seek the permission of the Allies for an invasion of Turkey, following the First World War and did so, occupying parts of Anatolia, effectively defeating what remained of the Ottoman state, until their repulsion by the forces of Atatürk who would go on to form the new Turkish Republic after the fall of the Ottomans to the West. For much of Turkish national discourse this is perhaps the most pivotal moment of recent history, as it saved the Turks from becoming the last

⁵⁸² This being the term for those who are generally called 'Greek Orthodox' but more often employed in Turkish discourse to distinguish the Orthodox Christian community native to Turkey and Anatolia from an affiliation with Greece as a political and foreign entity.

⁵⁸³ I. ORTAYLI: 'The Greeks and Ottoman Administration During the Tanzimat Period', in C. ISSAWI and D. GONDICAS, 'The Greeks and the Ottoman Empire, from the Tanzimat to the Young Turks?' (in press) accessed at <http://www.h-net.org/~fisher/hst373/readings/ortayli1.html> 18 August, 2010.

Muslim power to finally capitulate to the West. Because here I cannot go into very extensive theory on the establishment of the Republic, a subject all of its own, I will maintain some brevity.

Essentially, Birtek's contention, which I enlist here, is that the repulsion of the Western, but especially Greek invasion, was the pivotal moment for the founding of what is now Turkish identity, as it is a 'motivational identity' founded upon a project, that of rescuing Turkey from the fate of many other Muslim nations who had fallen to the Western powers.⁵⁸⁴ Significantly, it is impossible to ignore the fact that in this pivotal narrative, the Ottoman Greeks were seen to have collaborated with the invading Greek army and thus to have forfeited their place within Turkish/Ottoman society. This had two effects on the incoming republic: First, it effectively ended the late Ottoman system in which Greeks, Armenians and other Non-Muslims had been encouraged to see themselves as part of the Ottoman state, aspiring to common values of inter-religious tolerance and cultural refinement. Clearly the system of the weak and defeated empire was not working, from the point of view of the founders of the new republic. Second, according to Birtek, this defining moment coloured the self-understanding of the Turkish people by projecting forward a 'mobilisational identity':

'What was formative was not that it was a war *against* the Greek army, but rather that it was a war that required a particular self-reliance and self-sacrifice, through which nationalism as a social movement could emerge and particular citizens' identities could be moulded...'⁵⁸⁵

The current Kemalist system which has undergone a number of changes over the years is a product of this particularly decisive moment, as Birtek explains. In a world that was once 'Ottoman' at an elite level and in which the term "Turk" meant, essentially 'peasant', Turkishness came to the fore as the most rallying and clear-cut identity for the whole community, a dramatic reversal. In a world that once held the Caliphate, a claim to leadership over the

⁵⁸⁴ G. AGOSTON, B. MASTERS: *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire* (New York 2009) 57-59.

⁵⁸⁵ BIRTEK: 'From Affiliation to Affinity', 25.

global Muslim community, a republic was instituted that curbed public practice of Islam to the greatest extent possible, changing the language of the call to prayer to Turkish (for a time) and forbidding the wearing of veils and traditional Muslim head gear.

Into the world of the crumbling empire, as the Ottoman world began to become more open to outsiders and archaeologists, Ephesus was excavated at the end of the 19th century and, at the same time, Roman Catholics took an interest in the location as belief grew that the House of the Virgin had been found on Nightingale Hill. The House of the Virgin, then, saw its veneration grow through perhaps the most rapid change that the Turkish/Ottoman world was to undergo. Quietly, a new tradition (one that would later be drawn on in the line of building tradition to bridge differences' as described by Yuan) was being constructed in a forested area behind the ruins of ancient Ephesus city centre, near the modern city of Selçuk.

The House of the Virgin in some way reflects the identity processes of Turkey and, in some aspects stands apart. First, it is important that while all of these fluctuations of war and identity re-assertion are taking place, bringing Turkishness into some tension with Christianess, Westerness and Greekness, amongst other elements, a space was being constructed somewhat outside of the conflicts that were later to develop in the Aegean that did for some years lead to temporary closure of the shrine, which did not truly begin to receive significant numbers of pilgrims until after the founding of the Turkish Republic and World War II.⁵⁸⁶

With the departure of the Turkish speaking Kirkindje Christians for Greece during the Exchange of Populations, the sacred place was entirely in the hands of the Roman Catholic Church and thus had taken on the international quality of the Roman Catholic Church rather than being associated with any of the local Greek, Armenian and Syriac churches of Anatolia. Most specifically, as previously mentioned, the Greek Orthodox church does not hold a significant stake in the location as it recognises

⁵⁸⁶ B. DEUTSCH: *Our Lady of Ephesus* (Milwaukee 1965) 99.

only the Jerusalem tradition as the place of the Virgin's 'Falling Asleep'. This is key to the identity of the House as a place representative of Christianity and yet one that has not been identified with the churches of the ethno-religious communities involved in the unrest of the inter-war period. While this has rarely been articulated formally, I believe that this distinction is worthy of note because it situates the House somewhat differently from other sacred places such as the Byzantine Emperor's Ayazma church of the Balat neighbourhood in Istanbul.

There are no multiple identities as such for Turkey in the way that there were for the Ottomans. The public and private have been collapsed as Birttek says. Churches are now Turkish churches. The Church of the Trinity in Taksim square, the centre of Istanbul, has a Turkish flag in front showing loyalty to the Crescent flying republic. The Turkish flag is sometimes pinned to the wall of petitions outside the House of the Virgin along with the traditional scarves, clothes and strings, an ancient Turkic way of showing attachment to a sacred place and the placement of a petition in spatial action and grounded physical religiosity above and beyond the limits of abstract religiosity and the absolute imaginative space of which we have spoken previously in our examination of Islamic cosmology of imagination. This is the grounding of a Turkish religiosity in a Turkish, yet Christian, shrine that forms part of a Heideggerian 'homeliness' process whereby the church has been adopted into the pantheon of Turkish sacred sites. As a European visitor remarked, 'the Turks see this church as theirs'. In Republican Turkey, the mobilisational and nationalist construction of self in nation has left little room for anything non-Turkish.

Yet, there is an important caveat that I must add: While this is one discourse acting upon the site, there is another one: The Christianity (not Italianess, Westernness etc...) of the site, a reality that co-exists with its appropriation by Turks. There is no doubt in my mind that what animates one visitors as opposed to another or one visitor at one moment verses the same visitor in a different moment or context, can vary and even be based on apparently opposed discourses.

As a case in point, there is Metin who (like Emre and the family of Zeynep) did not believe that the de-Islamisation of the 'Koran Room' was at all problematic or insulting because after all it was a 'Christian Space'. Yet, at the same time Zeynep and Metin both pointed out the partially Islamic quality of the space at other times. Metin, for example, said that he had seen Muslims praying near the shrine and that an Islamic group was told that this was a sacred place for them, worthy of their best behaviour because the Virgin Mary/Hazret Meryem is 'Our Mother too', a sentiment which he approved of. Indeed, if Mary's House is held sacred by and identified with Muslims, because Mary is their mother also, surely it is their space as well. Yet, not entirely so, it seems, considering the very little attention drawn to the fact that the space has been largely de-Islamicised by the Church's caretakers. What seems to emerge in the discourse of respondents is a shift in the articulation of identity and ownership at times depending on the issue of Turkish-Western public relations of a sort. Yes the House is 'ours' when this demands a respect from us for the sacred site but no it is not 'ours' when this means an appropriation that could be seen from the outside as fundamentalist, expansionist or an Islamically, territorially threatening force, playing into the historical pejorative narratives about the Turks. This appropriation/non-appropriation dichotomy also appears, one cannot forget, in a Turkey which sees itself as being entirely on the defensive rather than offense, since its most defining experiences are intimately associated with its near defeat at the hands of the West and, to a certain degree, Greece. This is distinct from the Turkey of European imagination, stuck hundreds of years ago in the past of Ottoman Expansionism, a reality seemingly diabolically different than the European colonialism justified by the West, contrastingly, by the Enlightenment values it is seen to have carried.

Importantly, the Turkish point of view and self-perception is radically different from its perception from outside, a noticeable tension that I find among many Turks I meet who are mystified by the West's seeming semi-conscious fear of them, a people who see themselves as strong and victorious but only by the slim margin of their mobilisational power harnessed to repel a much greater force, a force (the West, chiefly Europe and the US) that continues to be formidable and, frankly, stronger, as repeatedly emphasised by my

interviewees. That this has led to an identity discourse that produces peaceful and open platitudes about a sacred site such as Meryem Ana was certainly not in my own purview at the beginning of this project's hypothetical development. Turkish respondents sometimes placed great importance, also, on being seen (collectively) in a positive light by the West, a point brought out by two of my interviewees.

On one occasion I had compared Turkish and Palestinian rituals when explaining my project to a young man from Istanbul who, incredulously asked, 'But you couldn't possibly compare Turks to Palestinians, could you?' When I asked another Turkish respondent whether he thought this was linked to the expression of anti-Arab sentiment (sometimes overflowing into racism) which I sometimes found in Turkey, he replied that while indeed there could be an element of racism in such a response, most likely Mustafa (the young man who reacted in shock to the comparison) was simply thinking 'what will the Westerner's think of us?' (if Turks are seen to be similar to Palestinians, so maligned in Western media). The desire to be thought well of by the West,⁵⁸⁷ in short, is a recurring theme and one that informs Turkish identity deeply, impacting on the relationships of Turks to such phenomena as shared pilgrimage, making many very proud of these sites and the Ottoman heritage that they reflect.

In historical terms it is also noteworthy that many of my interviewees spoke of having 'always lived together in harmony under the Ottomans' and that, for this reason it should come as no surprise that such mixed ritual forms developed in close connection with each other. Sezen indirectly made a similar comment, noting that these shared sites are something of a transposition from another era and older shrines to the present, such as that of the Ayazma (Fountain) Church in Balat, where the Byzantine Emperor was immersed on Fridays and which maintains a continuity to this day, with regular visits by Istanbulite Muslim

⁵⁸⁷ While I am aware that there is no one monolithic West, there is a constructed West and this is the one that takes its place at the table of dialogue, however much some might understandably wish to do away with it as a concept.

women who come for the priest's blessing on Fridays.⁵⁸⁸ While the House of the Virgin Mary does not share this Ottoman and Byzantine atmosphere of venerable history, considering that it was not fully and officially in use by the Roman Catholic Church until 1896 (having been not popularised by the very small Kirkindje Christian community previously, according to church authorities⁵⁸⁹), some short decades before the dissolution of the Sultanate. However, there does seem to be a natural association between the holy place and the identification of Turks with a former Ottomaness with its concomitant reputation for an elite cosmopolitanism and the multi-cultural/multi-religious tolerance, often articulated.

D. Identity And Changing Contexts: Turkish Muslims, Meryem Ana and Shared Pilgrimage

Identity shifts (performative identity shifts, at least) need not take place as part of immense historical shifts, huge demographic changes or political interventions and mobilisations. Instead, shifts in identity can manifest from one moment to another from one space to another, literally or metaphorically as seen in the shift of perspective found in many of my interviews. Neshe, additionally, was a respondent who changed perspective from a macro to micro level and horizontally from space to space. When speaking about my visit to Antakya and its continued Ottoman-like pluralism, Neshe expressed great interest in going to Antakya, a city in her native Turkey that she had never visited before. Further, she was very keen to show me to places in her neighbourhood. In one area she enthusiastically pointed out that a mosque and an Armenian

⁵⁸⁸ Interview with church caretaker, 10 January, 2010.

⁵⁸⁹ Here, in the spirit of maintaining an awareness of the subaltern voice, it bears mentioning that most of the representation of the Kirkindje Christians is mediated by Roman Catholics from major western powers, who maintain a hegemonic position and 'discovered' the site which still was in some use by local Christians, according to them, at least yearly at the time of the Feast of the Dormition (Eastern Orthodox) or Assumption (Roman Catholic) of Mary. As such, it may not fully represent the voice of the Kirkindje community.

church stood side-by-side. Somewhat more reservedly, she pointed out the mosque by her house which had historically been attended by the Crypto-Jewish Donmeh community that once was predominant in her neighbourhood.⁵⁹⁰ What was particularly interesting, however, was that she was the most adamant of my respondents that she felt very uncomfortable in churches, did not engage in prayer there and had not lit candles at the House of the Virgin Mary when she went. Sezen, in a third-party comment on this interview felt it important to point out that Neshe was particularly aware that the Church was a Non-Muslim space. It is important, therefore, to take note of the ways in which our viewpoints and reactions vary not only by context but by the discourse we are engaged with. That is to say that, while physical spaces changed and the interviewee made a variety of comments that were basically positive towards an interculturality symbolised by different places of worship, the theological aspect (if Sezen's interpretation is to be adopted) was more dominant at a particular point. This is not an exceptional case, as during the course of this project a number of examples have appeared even outside the context of sanctuaries under consideration, as previously mentioned in the introduction.

Deepening a bit from the notion of context, is the Turnerian version of the notion of 'field', which, modified for our purposes,⁵⁹¹ is illuminative when considering the shifts which can be observed in the area of shifting notions of identity as I have here seen outplayed in the somewhat grey and liminal arena of sacred space and its parallel worlds such as the home, the spaces of government and other locations for the acting of identity. Turner defines field as, 'the abstract cultural domains where paradigms are formulated, established, and come into conflict.'⁵⁹² A classic case of field shifting is that of a woman from Uganda who, while always considering herself a Christian when asked to

⁵⁹⁰ See C. SISMAN Chapter 3 'The History of Naming the Ottoman/Turkish Sabbatians' in R. OUSTERHOUT: *Studies on Istanbul and Beyond* (Philadelphia 2007).

⁵⁹¹ I don't employ the term here with as much emphasis on the field as a locus of conflict, but rather the playing out of tensions.

⁵⁹² V. TURNER: *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* (Ithaca 1974) 17.

define herself religiously, shifted modes depending on food taboos, holidays and other circumstances. Because of a negotiation in her family around an intermarriage, she was raised as the only Christian in an otherwise practicing Muslim family. Primrose is adept at field-shifting and adaptation. Despite her formal affiliation, she has adopted the custom of not eating pork and hosted a Ramadan fast break dinner in which she covered her head while preparing and serving dinner. Further, while speaking to a Moroccan young man at another event, she went as far as to express her hope that more people would convert to Islam and said that, when she is with her family and wants to know how to do a given practice in the most Islamically correct way, she follows her brothers lead because he is such a devout young man and, all of this, despite having been a church going Christian from birth. Context (the people she is interacting with, the holidays being celebrated) seems to be paramount. Similarly, the young Muslim woman from Pakistan living in my building during the period in which I undertook this research, consistently engaged in Hindu ritual while amongst friends from India, lighting incense before an image of Ganesh in the house of a Brahmin friend yet never hesitating to identify herself as a Muslim, as mentioned in the introduction. Importantly, she never, in the time I spent with her, brought any specifically Hindu practice or symbolism into her own house, a fact that clearly highlights a difference in fields between that of the home and the space of the other, despite a deeply universalist paradigm that otherwise seemed to treat all religious traditions as equally valid.

In this same vein, Meryem Ana Evi is a location for the playing out of these multiple fields of identity. Those who at home maintain Turkish Muslim traditions, take on elements of Christian practice when at Meryem Ana or St Antoine's Church. Armenian Christians take off their shoes and raise their hands in supplication while visiting the Islamic shrine of Eyup Sultan, despite their personal practice of or affiliation with Christianity. Primrose, though more intimately Christian by self-articulation can take on the modes of a Muslim woman when shifting context, location and more profoundly, field. At Meryem Ana, those to whom I spoke often identified themselves as Muslims (secularist in orientation in

all but a few cases) as the base line of identity (as Primrose considers herself fully Christian) and yet while that did not change, their articulations of identity when discussing their relationship to Meryem Ana Evi could vary greatly. In ritual terms, they were willing to adopt both Christian and Turkic practices at the shrine, both lighting candles and tying votive strings and cloths. When speaking of stakeholdership and the identity of the shrine itself, they were able to both see it as a fundamentally Christian church in terms of ownership and formal guardianship but both Muslim and Christian in ownership on a more abstract level when discussing other issues, as in the case of Metin, above. In the case of Metin, both articulations were made at distinct moments in different trains of thought, employing two different discourses.

Conclusion: Patterns in the Shifting Sands of Identification

While no one over all theory can account for the role of identity in shared pilgrimage praxis, by any possible stretch of the imagination, it is in keeping with the overall viewpoint of this research undertaking that contextualization, by contrast, is very much possible and advisable. Albera, in a significant work on the issue of shared pilgrimage has said as much in response to the theory of 'antagonistic tolerance' as put forward by Robert Hayden⁵⁹³. Taking on this critique and based on my observations in the field, I have sought to more deeply contextualize identity as it has appeared in the phenomena surrounding the House of the Virgin Mary in Ephesus and in shared pilgrimage more generally. Identity is a particularly interesting construction because of the basic tension between two realities: Identification is both seen to be ultimately solid and yet also so mercurially shiftable, even self-contradictory, built of stories half understood or related to others subtly and unconsciously changed for the purpose of being heard. Entire social identities can change en masse, as even the most cursory reading of Turkey's previous century and a half can attest to. It may change when necessary and has an amazing capacity to call on new resources, particularly those paradoxically from a venerable and seemingly unchangeable past. Taking all of this into

⁵⁹³ ALBERA, COUROUCLI: *Religions Traversées*, 356-358.

account, it is perhaps most revelatory for understanding multi-religious and multi-ritualised spaces, that while identity may be professed as solid and singular, it inevitably and fascinatingly undergoes some temporary hybrid metamorphosis (to varying degrees) in the liminal space between religious identities in the convergence of moment and place of shared pilgrimage.

Chapter 10

Conclusion



Shared pilgrimage is a moment of delicately and precariously poised relationship. It is a snapshot, a frozen instance that defies the conventional conceptualisations of religion. As Shields says, 'moments are revelatory of the totality of possibilities contained in daily existence.'⁵⁹⁴ In Ephesus, moments are revelatory of the diverse, flexible and ritually rich possibilities contained in religious cultures that many have come to think of as simple

⁵⁹⁴ SHIELDS: *Lefebvre*, 58.

dogmatic monoliths; these are alternative yet traditional instances of encounter. Ephesus' House of the Virgin and similar sites around the Islamic world insist on broadening our view, of being revelatory, even if debatably not always what we think they are. These 'realandimagined places' (to borrow Soja's neologism) are always multi-layered, sometimes fractured or violent, alternatingly harmonious or poorly-shared and consistently palimpsestic.

This study has been a selection, a selective set of ideas, propositions, theories and reflections arising both metaphorically and physically from the space of Meryem Ana Evi. The analysis is in part abstract but drawing concretely on the space itself. Such is the effort, to cull some points of reference in history, culture, belief, communal identification, gesture, etiquette, theory and what it means for communities and individuals to carry on relationships in the space of ritual, in the temenos, the liminal precincts where the outsider gaze is increasingly noticing activity that does not entirely confirm its previously held assumptions about the nature of religious identity and its relationship to ritual. But, as our limited and stereotyped notions of ritual and religion in more traditional societies begin to unravel, what are we left with? Need we simply reconstruct a new view that sees regions such as the Levant as hotbeds of religious syncretism in which truly independent religious identities barely exist? Or shall we, on the other hand (as has been debated in the discussion around Robert Hayden's work) assume that the more obviously hybrid forms of religiosity are hiding a hostility and separation deeper and more relevant than the apparent harmony. The questions are not simple and the respondent generalisations are nearly impossible to fully defend. Here, then, I have placed the discussion on several important tracks to give it a fuller context aiming to ask to what degree these generalisations have some validity and to generally satisfy the need for a greater familiarity with the phenomenon of shared pilgrimage. I endeavour at this stage to bring the analysis full circle drawing into one piece of work the main points of analysis that have come from an interaction between the initial backgrounding of the subject and the next steps in the research process. The process of spatial analysis *cum* deep contextualisation has begun with a review of the entire field of share pilgrimage, followed by a defining of terms which are building blocks for the

entire analysis. From the point that there is entry into the field with a particular focus on Ephesus, broadening out into the spatial practice at similar locations and finding points of analysis that, as issues arising in the field, raise a series of questions not sufficiently understood simply with the received background knowledge. From here I endeavour to draw out some key points that have come from the field, particularly as they both elaborate upon the key concepts and extend them into new territory. I will proceed to look at each element. But from this closing vantage point, they will be unfolded as interlocked subsets of concepts, rather than separated into singular topics, reflecting something closer to their appearance in the actual ritual space. On the whole, I have found that many of the themes present here, but particularly *adab*, hospitality and relationships, form triads that cannot be separated, the further one moves towards synthesis. They are terribly difficult to see as artificially separate issues and yet it is necessary to see them as such in order to better understand them, initially.⁵⁹⁵

Religion, Ritual, Space, Syncretism and Hospitality

Before entering into the field, I have undertaken to background the study as the first step. Primarily this has taken the form of setting the scene of shared pilgrimage generally, looking at the Islamic and Islamicate cultural landscapes within which this particular form of sanctuary has developed. The range is wide, in

⁵⁹⁵ Here there is some similarity to the debate in Anthropology around the framing of two separate traditions within a given religion, in which one is known as the greater tradition, and one the little tradition. Evidence points to some distinction in certain moments between the two ways of being religious and as a tool for explanation. The reality is, however, that actually finding the two 'traditions' within a religion as occupying more than one space or being actually separate in a given moment is difficult from an empirical point of view. At the same time, it is impossible to deny that certain types of 'smaller' folk religious traditions do in fact exist to some degree separately. They are not separate enough to be clearly delineated at all times, but seem to demand a certain amount of categorization in order to work for an anthropological analysis. A. BARNARD and J. SPENCER (eds.): *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (London 1996) 405-407.

geographical/cultural terms and in the variety of religious configurations.

Religion and ritual are conceptually linked by certain key similarities: First and foremost, at a more epistemic level it has been especially important to see the highly contingent and Western context-specific nature of both terms. Both have had a tendency to be synonymous with Christian and Post-Christian notions of Christianity as normative in religion and ritual. Over time, as seen in the sources mentioned by Asad and Knott, both ideas have become slowly more encompassing. They are both ideas that, in many societies, are limited to etic discourse or emic discourses that have engaged with or adopted commonly held Western notions of ritual and religion⁵⁹⁶, a phenomenon that is of course wide spread. A modern Turk may maintain a notion of religion as a belonging to community as in the classic Ottoman *millet* model in which a religious community is a 'nation' or may identify herself as an Atheist or Non-Muslim, basing her concept of religious identity on an understanding more accented towards personal belief and therefore paralleling more (but not equating to) Protestant formulations. "I am an Atheist at the moment" stated one respondent in Turkey while 'I am technically a Muslim, but not a believer' was the formulation of another, expressing different ontologies regarding similar states of (un)belief. In one case, the traditional notion of religion as belonging to a community of birth was adopted with the other one focused on personal conviction.

Ritual has shown itself, in my own work in the field to be highly bricological via the intentionality of a diversity of pilgrims with a diversity of perspectives and cultural and religious traditions adding layers to the collage as somewhat literally signed with a Turkish flag on the petition wall outside the house of the Virgin Mary in Ephesus.

As each actor approaches the bricolage that even high clerical ritual is, he or she adds their own layers to the collage. Why, then, would there be any surprise that what has been term 'syncretic'

⁵⁹⁶ My experience in Turkey is that most people are comfortable with the notion of 'ritual' as it is a word that has been adopted into the modern Turkish language. However, not all respond entirely to the notion of ritual, as such, when, for example, asking me about the subject of my research.

and hybrid can also develop in the crossing of religious boundaries during shared pilgrimage? The cobbled-together nature of ritual as discussed by Paul Post⁵⁹⁷ has consistently presented itself to me in the field. This does not mean that there are no boundaries drawn between religious streams, even at the level of popular religion. Such a position would be absurd. Indeed there are and indeed they do often correspond to the limits imposed by distinct religious beliefs, such as the tendency to eschew signing the cross, often, amongst Muslims who otherwise adopt some Christian practices such as venerating icons when at mixed shrines. This is not only bricolage, but also a moment of negotiation, creating a sort of individual and unofficial folk-Islamic style of showing respect for an image of, perhaps, a Koranic figure in the context of the religious other, a 'revelatory moment' in the words of Shields, that demonstrates something of the form taken by religious hybridity generally. This was a theme repeating itself via a variety of formulations in different places as I witnessed that Turkish Muslims might refrain entirely from any spatial practice recognisably Christian but show their respect by saying Bismillah silently under the breath when entering a church or kiss their own hand and raise it to the forehead in classic sign of respect for an absent person, but doing so in this context towards the Virgin's image in the chapel of the House of the Virgin Mary. On the other extreme, some would go as far as to ask to receive sacraments. The ritual actor, whatever her or his religious background, is in these snapshot moments highly creative and spontaneous, even when very committed to orthopraxis.

Religion, and ritual are also both conceptually and practically linked to space because, as Knott has stressed in her triad,⁵⁹⁸ they are all at work as factors within sacred space, an ambit which she insists on not distinguishing essentially from the secular. Indeed, her theory strikes a particularly strong cord within the ambiguous world of tourism at religious sites and the great variety of shades of grey which exist between secular tourism and pilgrimage, which cannot be separated out in space. It has become increasingly clear over the course of my time in the field that space is, at the risk of

⁵⁹⁷ POST: 'A Symbolic Bridge', 363.

⁵⁹⁸ KNOTT: *The Location of Religion*, 81-89.

sounding cliché, a construct. That is to say that any two individuals (to use a helpful binary) enter into a physical and abstract construction of space with their own subjective experience of the sanctuary and bring their own contents, redefining the space for themselves, *de facto*. In Lefebveren terms, there is a play between representations of space and spaces of representation, perceived and conceived space, unfolding as spatial practice and being, in turn influenced by the spatial practice itself, which impacts the space as it is physically changed in response to visitors and pilgrims. A classic and relevant case in point has been the increased Christianisation of Meryem Ana Evi. While there appears to be little concern about this from those I interviewed, it is clear that a shift to Christian symbolism in the 'Koran room' space where Muslims would traditionally perform ritual prayers next to the Roman Catholic chapel, is an intentional move of reclamation, one that most of the Turkish Muslims were unconcerned about as they saw the space to be primarily Christian and themselves as guests. Clearly their spatial practice was in some way influential in determining the shift towards reclamation by the clergy. That is, the spatial practice of the Muslim community caused a shift in the conceived space as it was redesigned by its Roman Catholic owners, covering it with icons, drawing it (through the conceptual) more into the perceptual space of typical Christian praxis and thereby shifting the spatial practice of the Muslims who, in large part, are no longer praying in the shrine to the same extent, according to pilgrims who have visited over a number of years. It has been suggested that this is because of the awkwardness (or impermissibility) of performing Islamic prayer in the direction of iconography.⁵⁹⁹

Bricolage has been mentioned as an aspect of all ritual. Syncretism, as a bricological religious reality, has historical epistemological problems similar to that of religion and ritual, in the sense that they come with colonial and Western-specific biases that have to be addressed and it is for that reason that I have emphasised the role of hybridity and bricolage over syncretism.

⁵⁹⁹ For discussion of the first generation of Muslim and their varying attitudes towards prayer in churches in the presence of icons, see: S. BASHEAR: *Qibla Musharriqa*, 273-281.

Additionally, in its strictest sense, syncretism is rare in shared pilgrimage locations. I have previously pointed out that looking at a definition of syncretism and religion in which full syncretism (staying closer to the classic Greek term *synkretismos* and Colpe) is a full merger between two religious traditions into an entirely new one and religion must include a self-perpetuating 'elective fraternity' that carries forward a chain of memory into the future, (as per Hervieu-Léger) there is almost no real case of shared pilgrimage between Abrahamic traditions that goes to this depth of 'syncretism'. However, I was surprised to find that the hybrid forms which Turkish Muslims would engage with in Christian sanctuaries do go further than I had understood from my initial review of the literature. While there is some mention of 'prophylactic baptism' in the literature,⁶⁰⁰ a practice of Muslim families giving their children for baptism as a thanksgiving or for spiritual protection (not necessarily implying conversion),⁶⁰¹ I was surprised to find that in the St Antoine church in Istanbul, for example, there were concerns among the clergy due to large numbers of Non-Catholics coming to receive communion during mass, so much so that announcements were made and some were even stopped at the altar and asked their religious affiliation. These, it appears, are the limits of religious hybridity, for many, Christian and Muslim alike. What still appears to be unknown is any true formal blurring of religious labels until the point of the formation of an entirely new tradition, perhaps with the debatable exception of some practices in the (now suppressed in Turkey) Bektashi Sufi Order, but that is beyond the scope of this undertaking.⁶⁰²

Hospitality is somewhat unique in its role as an important background factor, leading to the later further contextualisation via the broader notion of *adab*. While hospitality is certainly an ambient element of relationships in shared pilgrimage space, it seems to be more detectable as a value in the older and more established sanctuaries in Turkey in which local relationships are more longstanding. In some cases I have seen hospitality

⁶⁰⁰ HASLUCK: *Christianity and Islam*, 31-34.

⁶⁰¹ HASLUCK: *Christianity and Islam*, 36.

⁶⁰² HASLUCK: *Christianity and Islam*, 151-152.

articulated more clearly, such as when a visiting priest and walking pilgrim requested and was given 'hospitality' by the Capuchin monks managing the House of the Virgin. However, drawing more closely to the core theme, it was only in the much older church of Blacharnae, where for centuries the Byzantine Emperors immersed themselves in the sacred fountain on Friday, where I saw an explicit exchange of intercommunal hospitality in a very brief 'revelatory moment'. A Turkish Muslim woman, wearing a headscarf, entered with her daughter and spoke to the caretaker saying 'I am a guest' to which the Istanbulite Greek caretaker (i.e. an actor from the same local cultural context) nodded in acknowledgement, echoing a common dialogue taking place, as shared pilgrimage researchers of all theoretical stripes agree, for many centuries.

Hospitality is seen as a key value of Islamic culture not only by Muslims themselves but also by those whose lives have brought them close to the Muslim community, such as the French orientalist Louis Massignon and French Post-Structuralist Derrida who, despite coming from very distinct disciplines, saw their experience of (and origins in, in Derrida's case) the Islamic world as a lesson on the role of hospitality. In the case of Derrida it was to inform his radical epistemic notions about the role of language and perhaps even more fundamentally it was the basis for almost all of Massignon's significant contribution to the field of Islamic Studies. Further, as it brought him into the political arena, it became an ideology of peace and coexistence between France and the Muslim world, particularly during the Algerian War of Independence during which he instituted a Muslim-Christian pilgrimage in Brittany based on an Ephesian model and centring on the cult of the Seven Sleepers as connected to the same ancient city. In this case, we see a conscious employment of Islamic and Abrahamic discourses of hospitality but there is also the reality that hospitality has its limits, a fact that becomes useful when we begin to look at the debate about shared ritual spaces and whether or not they are truly hospitable.

Ephesus, Imagination, Adab, Relationship, Tourism/Tradition, Identity

The history of Ephesus and the role of imagination, as the first two topics of interest for placing the experience of pilgrimage in Ephesus in the context of time, place, and fieldwork, are highly interrelated. Ephesus was, before the coming of Christianity, a city of goddesses, a city that essentially grew around its temple, a city in which the goddess has changed forms, but she has predominated with shifting powers and shifting rituals as a variety of deities have taken up residence in her city, from a variety of traditions, from as far as Persia and Egypt. The sands have literally shifted underneath her feet, moving the temple and the city, and yet the goddess Artemis remained for some time, as St. Paul was to find when attempting to bring Christianity to the area. Of course, it does not go without notice that Ephesus also went on to become a significant centre of Marian devotion, with the declaration of Mary as Theotokos (God-bearer) taking place there in 431 of the Common Era.⁶⁰³ That it has even gone on to develop a Muslim following, beginning with a revival of Marian popular religion at the end of the 19th century, seems to almost bizarrely place it as a perennial host to female archetypes regardless of religious identification. From a more critical point of view, it seems natural to view this continuity as a result of shrewd politicking on the part of changing priesthoods (many centuries previous to the 19th) to retain power as the key religious powers underwent a coup. This would be a reality that found itself being echoed as the city became a key Marian shrine visited by tourists and Muslims, priests and pontiffs, again in the last century. Indeed, such an observation is not without evidence, but it is something of a predictable teleological straight line from A to B and on to C and is a view that had already been expressed many times over.

Observation of multiple contingent elements has offered a fuller picture. Going a step further beyond these somewhat facile observations is also helpful particularly in looking at what it means to share a particular saintly or prophetic figure in general, as a similar issue to the transformation of a divine figure over time

⁶⁰³ DEUTSCH: *Our Lady of Ephesus*, 51.

(Kybele to Artemis, Artemis to Mary, for example). I have seen this elasticity of symbolism as pivotal for tracing lineages of imagery and seeing a semiotic development that need not be only a shrewd clerical scheme but (perhaps additionally) a development of religious tradition that is more smooth and continuous than the over-simplified creation of religion *ex nihilo* that many naively expect (thus the surprise at continuities between ancient goddess-forms and the Virgin Mary, for example). Inevitably a continuity develops as symbolic systems that can be easily connected (feminine archetypes, St. George, Elijah and al-Khidr) are recycled and layered over one another in both horizontal and vertical forms of religious/symbolic hybridities, clerical influences aside.

Among the topics coming from the field, the querying of tourist identification and the ambiguity of secular visitation to sacred sites has been the most revelatory in terms of seeing shared pilgrimage outside a reductionist lens that would have us treat ritual as though it existed in a separate religious world all its own. Perhaps the most important insight, in this area, was the reality that the shared and mixed element of shared pilgrimage includes considerably larger communities than had been supposed at the beginning of this undertaking. The sharing of public space at a pilgrimage site has the dynamic of drawing a number of identity constellations into the space, making Ephesus, for example, something much more than a place where 'Christians' and 'Muslims' meet. Rather, there are a variety of identities including various shades within Christian and Muslim identification that are present at Meryem Ana. Further, there are visitors to the site who do not fully identify themselves with any particular religious tradition at all and who identify their reasons for being present as ranging from absolutely non-religious and non-spiritual, to including some element of the numinous or a curiosity about the religious practices of others and enjoyment of the natural environment, among others. If we look at this element of the beehive like activity of the shrine, we see that, while it is at times difficult to categorise the great variety of intentionalities and subjectivities brought to the space, like bees, visitors often have an orientation of some kind in their travels. The placing of motivations along a spectrum has been well described as a series of varied modes by Cohen. Cohen hermeneutically describes the

gamut of visitors based on a greater orientation towards a going away from home as a personal centre, to going towards the holy place as an almost cosmological centre.⁶⁰⁴ While there are a variety of gradations, this shows itself to be a very helpful form of discerning orientation in travellers, whether travellers with more sacred or more secular/recreational intentions and, of course, such orientations can undergo shifts moment-by-moment.

This cannot be disconnected from the theme of identity, identity as perceived by the scholarly gaze and identity from within the culture studied. On both accounts, the work of Collins-Kriener contributes a further perspective to the tourist/pilgrim dynamic that, while not mapping on identically due to cultural variation, illustrates very well something of the position of many in Turkey who engage ritually with shared pilgrimage sites. She described the Sephardic and Mizrahi communities in Israel whose members, attending kabbalistic grave visitation pilgrimages, fall into the category of 'traditional' visitors. That is that, while they may not be highly religiously observant in orthodox terms, they do retain associated religious and popular religious practices (Jewish but coming from an Islamicate cultural context) alongside a Middle-Eastern and North African culture.⁶⁰⁵ I find this fascinatingly similar to many of the Turkish respondents that I have spent significant time among, rather than engaging only in quick on-site interviews with. The typical respondent tended to not eat pork (for example), identify as Muslim, but also spend little time in any sort of formal Islamic observance (precisely the sort of character described by my religious respondent Neshe, in her critique of shared pilgrimage, because such things are practiced by people who 'don't go to the mosque'). She or he often felt very comfortable visiting churches, not out of any expressed belief in Christianity but out of an appreciation of their beauty or for the purpose of shared pilgrimage. Often I would be told 'I am not religious, but if I go to Meryem Ana, I always tie a string and ask for something'. It is as though it is simply an ambient part of modern Turkish culture to engage in small sacred acts in these locations, with little ideological or theological worry or reflection.

⁶⁰⁴ COHEN: 'A Phenomenology'.

⁶⁰⁵ COLLINS-KRIENER: *Graves as Attractions*, 71.

I see this as very closely linked to popular religiosity generally which is quite comfortable pulling together elements that, in a classic case of bricolage and (to some degree) hybridity, takes what is most useful and what fits circumstantially within the wider limits of religious culture (rather than formal textual religiosity). This is the 'lived religion' to which the bulk of this project is dedicated. However, it is not the only form of practice among Turks visiting Meryem Ana and its parallel spaces. Others, who were mainstream religious, have appeared on the scene, describing themselves and their practices on the site, or lack thereof, to me. Some, like visiting imams and members of the Gulen movement, come with great respect and reverence but a) do not cross the lines set by their own religious tradition (i.e. they do not venerate iconography, for example) and according to my time in the field with them they generally b)engage in Islamic prayer forms while in the House, such as reciting Koran and Koranic litanies, privately, without disturbing the main Christian praxis maintained by the Church community that they say see as offering them hospitality. This group, however, is distinct from the traditional visitor who draws on tradition in a more free and relaxed way. This has been particularly illuminative in terms of trying to understand the profile of a visitor who is at once secular in orientation but willing to engage in ritual, religiously labelled (by herself or others, by a state which makes these official) and yet only partly and culturally involved with the religions tradition of her or his own community.

Identity and relationship are inseparable concepts as human subjectivities carry on their march of defining themselves in opposition to and in concert with one another, self and other. Both the sense of self and that of the other form building blocks or cells, if you will, of the shared pilgrimage beehive, a factor that I found to be very much present, although not always articulated. A number of identity issues and relationship discourses appeared in the field, with regard to the encounter of the Turkish Muslim with the Non-Muslim whether in commonly revered sacred places or more generally, seeing the encounter in the sacred space as one that is a 'moment revelatory of the totality' of relational 'possibilities'. Certain things have become clear in the dialogue between the theory with which I have entered the field as they have encountered both the grounded realities and articulations by ritual

actors in the spaces under consideration. Of what developed, the most directly explanatory regarding the role of identity and relationship in shared pilgrimage is the simple realisation that the Turks and their neighbours imply one another through a very great deal of shared history and culture. To some degree, this can be seen through the lens of ancestry. Turks, Armenians, Greeks and Arabs (among others) have intermarried and produced, largely, Muslim offspring who carry a multitude of ethnic and religious influences in their background⁶⁰⁶. This seems to lead to a certain broad outlook at certain levels of folk religious practice, but it is not the main factor. Instead, I posit, it is sustained relationship and sharing of secular or more general space, as it were, that leads to interpenetrating sacred space; it is not shared blood but shared cultural ancestry that leaves these imprints. Through sustained contact, this has been reflected also in Christian ritual flexibility at an unofficial level, but to a lesser degree.⁶⁰⁷

Vertical Vs. Horizontal Motivations for Shared Pilgrimage, Addressing Hayden

Looking at this vast collection of historical data, subjective narrative, history and theoretical propositions, I have quite naturally begun to look at shared pilgrimage based on both the expressed and less articulated motives for it, as expressed by my own respondents and as found in the literature. Increasingly, over the process of amassing this information and field work data, a picture became clearer which, like the tool I have used to describe 'realandimaged spaces' draws on a horizontal versus vertical heuristic device.

In this context I see motivations as being vertical when they are described by the respondent as chiefly between the individual and divinity or saintly and prophetic figures. Horizontal motivations I see as more communal ones that focus on, in these cases, the motivation to share something with others, particularly others of a different religious tradition or none at all. In the experiences that I have had textually and experientially, at least in

⁶⁰⁶ BIRTEK: 'From Affiliation to Affinity', 29.

⁶⁰⁷ HASLUCK: *Christianity and Islam*, 75-97.

the context of Ephesus, vertical motivations tend to outweigh horizontal ones for the attendees. What is shared at similar sites is primarily the saint or prophet venerated and only secondarily do glances go to either side where others of another religious tradition are praying in slightly different forms. However, we do see a reflection on the role of the presence of different communities when, taking a slight step back, a proverbial Greek Chorus begins to comment on the ritual praxis taking place, looking at its broader social implications.

When I see a Turkish woman enter into the church of Blacharnae, Saint Antoine, or Meryem Ana, I do not chiefly see an intercommunal relationship being foregrounded. When I conduct interviews with many pilgrims, similarly, I see only minimal attention being paid to communal/ethnic or even theological issues, as such. On the other hand, when I have spoken to the same woman's children and grandchildren (Zeynep, Metin, Emre etc...) who are non-practicing Muslims but ones with a consciousness about their identity and hopes for the Balkans and Anatolia to remain stable and at peace, they have often cast their gaze on these pilgrimages from a step removed and spoken to me of the importance of communal harmony, emphasising the aspect of pilgrimage that is relational.

This emphasis on the vertical versus horizontal dynamic, however, does indeed change and fluctuate by degrees, depending on context. In particular, there is the work of Bowman⁶⁰⁸ on the Palestinian shrines of Beit Sahour and Mar Elyas, in which he focuses on the communal solidarity between Palestinian Christians and Muslims that develops at these shrines. He notes that a reciprocity develops in which both communities share with each other certain holidays and holy places. He notes the level of solidarity that this engenders, plus the limits of hospitality, the ritual barriers past which Christians and Muslims do not step.⁶⁰⁹ He says that one of the important factors that appeared in the field, for visiting, was not just simply vertical, 'the specific reasons

⁶⁰⁸ G. BOWMAN: 'Nationalising the Sacred: Shrines and Shifting Identities in the Israeli-Occupied Territories', in *Man: Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 28:3 (1993) 431-460.

⁶⁰⁹ BOWMAN: 'Nationalising the Sacred', 27, 28.

people gave for attending ranged from the need for cures through the demands of religion to the pleasures of conviviality...';⁶¹⁰ as he goes on, we see communal concerns for positive relationships being foregrounded in this particular case of tense politics. Similarly, we have already looked at the Sufi presence in Malerkotla, India and its discourse around intercommunal harmony, famous for being the centre of a village believed to have been largely untouched by the violence in the Punjab during the partition of India. In these places, the way in which they signify communal harmony has come to be a discourse of its own in a way that is very self-conscious rather than simply a background to the focus on otherworldly concerns, such as petitioning saints for help with a variety of problems.

By contrast, Ephesus does not have a strong communal issue via an Armenian or Greek (i.e. local, political) tradition, at this point in time (although, it has been linked to local Orthodox Christians by believers in the site⁶¹¹ and does draw some visitors from the Eastern Churches, as noted in the field) and therefore the vertical seems to be much more primary. Meryem Ana Evi has a more international atmosphere. I would posit, however, that whatever the fluctuations and meanings that surround such a site, shared pilgrimage places ultimately emphasise the transcendent in their ritual and architecture, at the level of representational space, in Lefebvre's terms. Secondly they receive a number of meanings, sacred and secular, as the space is practiced in a dialogue between spaces of representation and representations of space. In a Palestinian environment, for example, it is unsurprising that, with political tensions being much higher, communal elements take on a greater role in the habitus of those engaging ritually with an ambiguous sanctuary.

The horizontal axis is overemphasised in the antagonistic tolerance theory of Robert Hayden, which I would like to address. I am in partial agreement with him, in so far as he refers to one dynamic that is frequently found in sacred places, but not as a meta-theory that can cover all cases under consideration. In fact, for some shrines, the vertical element is so strong that it maintains a coherent

⁶¹⁰ HAYDEN: 'Antagonistic Tolerance', 220.

⁶¹¹ DEUTSCH: *Our Lady of Ephesus*, 41-45.

pull on believers at its own level, while other social issues may be burning down the entire structure of the city in which the pilgrimage is taking place. A case in point is the city of Sarajevo with its pilgrimage triad described to me by a lifelong resident during my fieldwork. Residents of Sarajevo will move from the Muslim Sufi shrine of the Seven Brothers to the Roman Catholic Church of St. Anthony (patron saint of the city, for Roman Catholics and others) and on to the St. Savas Serbian Orthodox church as a form of pilgrimage/*ziyaret*. The pilgrimage forms a kind of triangular circuit (similar to many pilgrimage sites where, formally or otherwise, the shape of the site tends towards a kind of circumambulation). According to an interviewee who is a Bosnian refugee from Sarajevo living in the US and Germany after the war, these are living sites that, despite the worst days of conflict, would often be visited as three stops in one pilgrimage by Sarajevans, who regard all three sites as an integral whole, a three part patronage by saints of three religious traditions. Sacred space need not always reflect the dynamics of the wider social setting. Albera points out a similar example: The Church of Our Lady of Africa was constructed expressly to serve the colonial French community, in the particular style of that dominant and controversial group, and continues to be an open expression of the local church's missionary intent. Needless to say, such a position is not remotely popular in the Islamic world. Further, it is located in a politically tense part of Algiers. However, throughout the most dangerous moments of the Islamist insurgency and civil war of the 1990s, 'Madame d'Afrique' continued to receive large numbers of Muslim devotees.⁶¹²

A further danger in Hayden's theory beyond essentialism (an issue raised by, among others, Bowman) is the freezing of pilgrim's agency into intellectual straightjackets. Some believers will consciously manage their relationship to a shrine, keeping it tolerant (Malerkotla, Christian-Muslim solidarity in Palestine etc...) in the face of a great deal of pressure to fall into sectarianism. Pilgrims are free intention-full agents who may choose not to fall into the general oscillation observed in the

⁶¹² D. ALBERA: 'Pélerinages mixtes et sanctuaires 'ambigus' en Méditerranée' in S. S. CHIFFOLEAU and A. MADCEF: *Les Pèlerinages au Maghreb et au Moyen-Orient* (Damascus 2005) 361-362.

antagonistic tolerance theory. They may explicitly choose to keep the tradition of shared pilgrimage alive in the face of pressure to the contrary and a general breakdown of relationships in other arenas (both in the general sense of the term and *senso* Turner).

Yes, there is a discernible tendency for shared pilgrimage to be at its most functional when power structures are clear and to be most tense when there is a vacuum as Hayden posits,⁶¹³ but a) this does not account for the many exceptions that appear when pilgrims apply themselves to avoiding the spilling over of this antagonism from one realm to another (as in the above examples) nor does b) it take on the role of human agency generally, with his view falling into an almost unquestioned determinism. Further it attempts to essentialise in a way that freezes religious identities in place and pits them against each other 'naturally' which although not intended as such, shares a common theme with nationalist discourses. While Hayden insists that he is not essentialising,⁶¹⁴ and does not express nationalist views, of course, it is hard to avoid the impression that his approach largely depends on unarticulated essentialist assumptions in the way that it misses much of the nuance in the particularities present at many mixed shrines. As Albera suggests, if Hayden can apply a processual analysis to the fluctuations and changes in religious spaces, why not also a processual look at the fluctuations in identity (religious or otherwise) rather than freezing them into one mode?⁶¹⁵

In the end, it does not stand up to the scrutiny of lived experience in sacred places to suggest that the grandmothers who pray for their children's exams at Meryem Ana Evi are simply there because of the ease with which they can enter such locations under a modern regime of Turkish secularism or that there is a basic underlying competition between Christianity and Islam taking place which, in this processual analysis, is simply being paused because of a lack of heightened social tension. Finally, Hayden's view does not take fully into account c) the ethic in a given culture, which many but not all share, towards an effectively universalist theology and/or an experience of the basic

⁶¹³ HAYDEN: 'Antagonistic Tolerance', 228.

⁶¹⁴ HAYDEN: 'Antagonistic Tolerance', 228.

⁶¹⁵ ALBERA: '*Pèlerinages mixtes et sanctuaires "ambigus"*', 361-362.

sacral, which simply won't fit neatly into such a model that suggests only power relations (rather than discourse or communal ethics) as the main basis of coexistence at a ritual level of social interaction. Where is an understanding of the impact of the ethos that forms part of the repertoires of religious discourses which exist in the cultures studied? This is much the same question asked by an Indian respondent to Hayden's work who wondered if Hayden had taken into account the entire repertoire of universalist forms of sanctity represented by the poetry and teachings of Kabir (mentioned in the introduction, for example) and whether one could merely explain such a significant element of Indian culture through a sort of momentary relaxation of the tensions which are the more normative and consistent aspect of a given culture's natural reflex in the power-sharing environment of mixed sanctuaries.⁶¹⁶ Hayden seems to not understand the point posed by Paddayya and to see her as simply positing a kind of idealism. Rather, Paddayya seems to be asking Hayden whether or not he recognises discourses of coexistence that have as legitimate a place in Indian culture as episodes of religious nationalism. This entire element of (in Paddayya's example) Indian culture, is largely ignored by Hayden who seems to suggest in his response to Bowman and Paddayya that their understandings are bordering on naive. Instead, I would put forward what I see as the main intention of this entire project as an extremely important factor, that all phenomena of this kind must be seen in the fullest context possible, which includes deeply ingrained discourses of tolerance that may have an ongoing social impact, regardless of the particularities of a given set of political circumstances.

Ultimately, the privileging of competition or antagonism (with all of the issues it raises) as the most important element of a ritual's context can't be entirely accurate, no matter how well articulated. What Hayden does successfully do is show the extent to which romanticising shared pilgrimage is inappropriate in scholarship, demonstrating the significance to which antagonism and competition can make their appearance and encouraging a reading of the notion of tolerance that further extrapolates the more

⁶¹⁶ HAYDEN: 'Antagonistic Tolerance', 224.

passive and active varied forms that it takes, showing the subtle and gross forms of competition that can sometimes appear to be an active rather than passive tolerance. This is no small contribution and one that has been very illuminative. That Hayden observes a dynamic within shared pilgrimage is undoubtable; that it can be applied in its entirety to all cases is disputable.

Future Research: A Deepening and Widening of Context

A great deal remains to be done on this relatively new and growing theme, which could perhaps go in a number of directions: One eventuality is a deeper comparative contextualisation of shared pilgrimage practices in, for example, two cultural milieus. The comparative approach to these sites is almost universally applied, as we see in the cases of the major thinkers on this topic with Couroucli drawing on more than one example amongst the *Rum* communities of Turkey, Bowman with two main cases in a Palestinian context, Albera's focus on the Mediterranean and Hayden's theories which draw heavily on modern India and the former Yugoslavia, amongst others. What in most cases seems a natural next step is the development of a deeper historical/cultural viewpoint as suggested by Laszlo Kurti of the University of Miskolc in his comments on the Antagonistic Tolerance theory of Hayden.⁶¹⁷ I would put forward that further work in this area, combining the above two suggestions, would be productive if it consisted of, for example, an analysis of belief, space and gender as they unfold in the cultural milieu of the formerly Ottoman and Mughal territories within two particular mixed pilgrimage locations.⁶¹⁸ In such a case, one could contextualise the current atmosphere in modern India and Turkey as part of a lineage of belief and ritual formed by their historical process, as well as the combined religious and communal-political elements which are already well covered in the current work on shared pilgrimage currently taking place.

⁶¹⁷ HAYDEN: 'Antagonistic Tolerance', 222.

⁶¹⁸ I emphasise these particular 'imperial' periods not because they need be privileged so much as for their value as pre-modern 'globalised' societies in which there was immense religious diversity.

Further, I would put forward the potential for a relevant undertaking that would go more in the direction of focusing on the individual actors who appear in shared sacred space but with an increasing enquiry into who these actors are outside of the location as a way of better understanding what brings them into the temenos-zone of the mixed sanctuary. In my own work I would like to carry this forward by working especially on the traditional healing practices that are often associated with the extensive ritual and religious hybridity practiced (particularly by women) who carry on their religiosity and therapy from sacred locations that are already highly layered⁶¹⁹ to their own more domestic and work spaces where elements of the holy mixed pilgrimage locations are brought (relics or objects that have been sanctified by the place, such as holy water from the fountains at the House of the Virgin Mary, amulets etc...) and incorporated in the hybrid practices that they develop in their individual sacred spaces. This would mean going from the communal hybrid ritual space to the private hybrid ritual space. In this way, a movement out from mixed religious spaces to domestic and others places would be a very natural next step and one that could take gender and traditional healing into account for an ever-widening panoramic view of the web of relations connected to mixed pilgrimage sites. As the web widens and contextualises, so the more specific locations of mixed pilgrimage become better understood, through the contextualisation of the ritual actor's wider world. From the more expansive context, there can be a return to the more local and personal, better understood via the concentric rings model employed here.

Claude Lévi-Strauss famously insisted that ritual be studied 'in itself and for itself'. How paradoxical, then, that to undertake that very project requires such a wide net to capture the range of details, historical facts and factors 'outside' the ritual that can lead to a refreshing of the frozen image of multi-religious convergence

⁶¹⁹ See the aforementioned film 'Habiba' by Constanzo Allione and its exploration of an Uzbek healer's attitude towards the layers of religiosity present at shrines in her country that keep intact both shamanic/indigenous and Islamic levels of praxis within the same precincts: C. ALLIONE: <http://www.mystictv.org/habiba.htm> (accessed 15 November, 2010).

on common sacred ground as simply a location for inter-religious conflict. How very paradoxical that on encountering these multi-ritualised multi-religioned spaces there is so much disagreement about whether the coming together in space is in fact a harmonious encounter underneath the apparent convergence. Looking at the vast array of issues that appear while contextualising a single image, the roles of space, place, imagination, gesture, the welcoming of the other, the self assertion of communities and individuals, the vast historical and rich cultural worlds in which shared pilgrimage has grown, it is clear that there is no programme, no message for a particular insight to end interreligious conflict coming from mixed pilgrimage. But there is diversity, fluidity and a broader vision of what religion might be, a vision that includes all levels of religious practice and belief, not simply those that appear most easy to understand because of their more solid character, nor simply those forms of religiosity approved by clerical elites. Further, the boundaries between religious traditions, which once appeared so very inherently solid, soon come to appear as not unreal but a great deal more contingent, diverse and multiple in manifestation when seen through the angle of popular religion. While this might be particularly relevant to those who seek to understand better the reality of lived ritual and religiosity, it is also relevant in a world where greater understanding of Islam is an intellectual goal for many, within or without the academy. A more profound understanding of places like Meryem Ana Evi, which might initially seem like an obscure manifestation of Anatolian folk religion meeting Christianity, might instead be a beginning point for moving from the political and textual understandings of this religious tradition that so captivates the media debate-circuits in such a large number of societies and begin instead a further opening to lesser known aspects of Islam's day to day lived reality, beyond the limited horizons of much contemporary discourse. While I cannot claim to have answered a great number of questions here, it is hoped that at least this work opens some doors to a wider appreciation of religious diversity in those moments and spaces where Muslims and Non-Muslims (Christian and otherwise) have encountered one another, the subtleties of which scholars still endeavour to place in clearer context.

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Conference Paper

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Summary

This dissertation, presented for doctoral candidature, highlights an issue in the study of ritual that is of increasing interest to many involved in Ethnography, Anthropology, the Study of Religions and Ritual. It covers a wide spectrum of theory and data towards a synthesis of the major forces at work in the contexts producing shared pilgrimage practices with a particular focus on the area comprising the former ancient Ephesus, modern Turkey and neighbouring societies with a similar ritual ethos present in the cultural/religious ambit. Towards that end, a number of subjects have been expanded upon and research questions addressed, all towards the central question: Taking the House of the Virgin Mary in the modern day Izmir metropolitan area as a main example, why and how do Muslims, Christians and other non-Muslims converge on shared pilgrimage sites? The analysis draws on sources as varied as Continental Philosophy, Islamic Studies, ancient and recent History, Sociology and Anthropology of Religion, situated within the inter-disciplinary field of Ritual Studies.

The historical exposition centres chiefly on the ritual, political and geographical history of Ephesus, emphasising the city's importance in the ancient world and its particular positioning as not only a formerly metropolitan city but as a location with an economy and importance largely based on its temple culture centred on a cult of Artemis Ephesia that produced one of the wonders of the ancient world. Christianity took early root here (as noted by those who consider it to be the Virgin Mary's resting place) not only because of its significance as an urban centre but also because it hosted a sizable Jewish community, especially dating to the era in which Jews of the Middle Eastern diaspora were preferred by the Seleucids as loyal subjects to settle near important population centres. According to Christian sources, the Apostle Paul (among others) came to Ephesus and was driven out

because of his public criticism of the Artemis cult, upon which many in the city relied for their income. After the end of the Artemis cult and the establishment of Christianity, Ephesus maintained its centrality for a time as an apostolic see and was the site of the Council of Ephesus, an ecumenical council declaring the Virgin Mary to be *Theotokos*, 'God Bearer'. The city, which had intermittently been disabled by the silting of its harbour, gradually declined and did not play as important a role for either the Seljuk or Ottoman Turks after their conquering of Anatolia. After being reduced to an area inhabited by only a few families in the last two centuries and invaded twice by Greece, it was to be slowly repopulated eventually and became a centre of international interest from archaeologists after the re-discovery of the Temple of Artemis and as the claim developed (largely based on the writings of German Catholic visionary Catherine Emmerich) that the Virgin Mary had lived out her last days in a small house on Nightingale Hill outside the ruins of the former city. Although it was a new cult centre, a number of Muslims have, since that time, patronised the shrine, making it a busy centre of mixed pilgrimage in Turkey.

The House of the Virgin Mary, however, does not in any way stand alone as a shared pilgrimage site. Rather, it is a further example of ritual fluidity in both the Ancient Greek world and the modern Islamic context, having hosted the highly fluid varied and mixed ancient cults of a number of deities. In the context of more recent centuries, the Ottoman Empire (and the Islamic world generally) has hosted a variety of religious groups both at its centre and within its more blurry borders, all of which have, at various times, crossed mutual boundaries in pursuit of sanctity, healing and divine favours in the sanctuaries of another community. Christians have made offerings at the tombs of revered Sufis, Muslims have made entreaty at miraculous churches, Jews have incorporated Islamic North African style tomb veneration in their commemorations of saintly rabbis, and all three have converged at the tombs of significant Biblical/Koranic prophets. This is not to mention, of course, the further reaches of the Islamic world touching the non-Abrahamic traditions in places such as India and Sri Lanka where mixed pilgrimage is ubiquitous.

By and large, however, the concentration here has been on Ephesus and other locations within modern Turkey, such as Konya

and Istanbul (Istanbul still maintaining significant Greek, Armenian and Jewish residents) with a focus on ritual and space observation in addition to ethnographic field work interviews on identity and family mixed pilgrimage traditions. The sites observed included the Mevlana museum in Konya and a variety of shared pilgrimage sites in Istanbul. The main respondents have been those engaging in ritual on site, those with a family tradition of doing so and those decidedly against or ambiguous about such practices and religion generally. Across this spectrum, a ritual negotiation process became evident in addition to a focus on particular issues which begged further exploration as part of the contextualisation process, some of which arose spontaneously from experiences in the field, particularly on the side of more 'secular' topics such as identity, the history of Greek-Turkish conflict and the role of tourism in sacred places.

Among mixed pilgrimage sites there are a varieties of types of sites (in addition to different religious constellations such as Muslim-Christian sites, Jewish-Muslim sacred places etc...) and certainly all are not shared harmoniously. Indeed, some are amongst the most combustible religious locations found in areas of war and tension, leading to the eventual separation of the 'sharing' communities. Others teeter on the edge of greater conflict, while yet others appear to host a level of harmony and hybridity leading to a near-blasphemous level of mixing that some religious and intellectual purists might categorise as 'syncretism'.

This very defining of terms is, of course, not as straight forward as it might seem and the complexity of the process is itself illuminative. For that reason, syncretism as a term has been interrogated from the point of view that it cannot be validly wielded without the understanding that full merging between religious traditions (as commonly understood by the term) are relatively unusual and all religious traditions have a history of grafting a variety of elements together in the formation of ritual, which is here understood as an act carried out in a condensed and sufficiently particular way to be read as special, charged with meaning. Ritual is a common feature of religious traditions, considered here to be productions of a chain of memory that are particularly concerned with meaning and, in most cases, spirituality.

Looking at the layering process of hybrid ritual and the historical layers at sites such as Ephesus, it is clear that a certain commonality between venerated figures (horizontally, as communities converge simultaneously or vertically as symbolic systems overlay one another across spans of time, from ancient goddesses to more recent transcendent female figures, for example) is an indispensable element of shared pilgrimage. Analysing the role of imagination in religious culture and spatial practice can be undertaken from a number of directions, maintaining awareness that metaphorical and absolute spaces are inseparably implicated in one another. From within an Islamic perspective, there is a lineage of tradition that has seen imaginal space as the boundary between absolute divinity and humanness, as the space of religious devotion, with a concrete but contingent and liminal existence of its own, thus making the subject of religious imagination relevant to not only a western scholarly perspective, but also forming part of the emic tradition connected to holy places within the Islamic world. Imagination appears to be most key when it deals with the personages and beings venerated at a given site, so that, for example, Muslims and Christians envision the Virgin Mary similarly, while yet maintaining different beliefs and narratives about her. Similarly, symbolic links of imaginative overlap can exist in process with a different formation, so that pre-monotheistic figures mix with the characteristics of Christian saints that, in turn, share symbolic similarities with Islamic prophetic figures, leading to what appears to be a process of 'natural' linkage across historical and communal lines. Imagination must coincide in order for spatial practice to coincide. A sharing of metaphorical and absolute spaces is linked to a sharing of physical location.

Undergirding the hosting of the other in religious space is often an ethos of hospitality, particularly in the monotheisms. Hospitality is an element of *adab*, in an Islamic context, a flexible concept and value that can be applied to a wide variety of circumstances, including how to be a good guest, a discourse that has been subtly but articulated in the field on occasion, besides being ambient in the discourse of the Islamic world. Of course, such refined and compassionate forms of behavioural standards, while forming part of the milieu that supports shared pilgrimage, is also not immune to its own problems and limitations, nor can it be romanticised as a sort of charming Middle Eastern cure-all for social ills.

Adab and hospitality are, further, fundamental to the maintenance of relationship, another element that makes up the collage of influences converging in the largely grassroots, popular religious practice of historical multi-religious mixing at sacred places. Harmonious relationships between ethno-religious communities (with a reverse articulation possible for inharmoonious circumstances) link themselves to narratives of historical relationships. In the wake of nationalist discourses that redrew maps and nation-states in the twentieth century, communities that had once had high levels of shared pilgrimage practice saw their extant mixed pilgrimage sites linked to an edenic past in which conflict had not existed. This nostalgia (historicity aside) now plays an important role in shared pilgrimage narratives.

The divisions that lead to this often pivoted on a particular formulation of purity in identity, historical narrative, religion, and ethnicity, while shared pilgrimage evinces something of a greater historical ambiguity in the way that many communities operated before the advent of an emphasis on purity narratives, particularly in places like Turkey (and the heart lands of the Ottoman Empire, including the Aegean coast where Ephesus and many other shared pilgrimage sites are found). A tendency towards fluidity in ritual does not mean that differences in ethnicity and religion did not exist prior to this time but it does indicate different ways of constructing identity in different arenas (the political vs. cultural, spiritual vs. religious) and at different moments.

Taking these insights into consideration, it is clear that, while not all shared pilgrimage is harmonious or idealistic, it is certainly an important entry point for looking at the historical and cultural processes and issues at play in these very particular ritual circumstances, leading to insight into the range of elements that coincide at sites of ritual convergence. Amongst these are the relationship of ritual to religiosity, identity, religious imagination, post-modern notions of the relationship between space and activity, and the core values of cultures not yet fully understood by outsiders, as evinced in undertakings such as that represented in this text, works of research fundamentally based on the surprise expressed by those (the constructed West, as it were) outside the ambit of traditional cultures towards religious lineages previously thought to be considerably more solid and opposed structures.