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Chapter 1

Ritual encounters: Franciscans and Eastern Christians in an Islamic city

Recently Christopher MacEvitt has referred to the forced and uneasy cohabitation of various Christian communities in the Holy Land at the time of the Latin principalities in the Levant as “rough tolerance”. He described the encounter of Latin and Eastern Christianities at the time of the Crusades as marred by mutual ignorance of their respective theological traditions and tolerance restricted by the assumption of Latin precedence in the organization of the new polity¹. After the Muslim conquest of Acre in 1291, the status of Christians in the Holy Land returned to pre-Crusades times. They were a legal and depleted minority, while Latin Christians were chased out of the Holy Land altogether.

Sidney H. Griffith has referred to the position of the fissiparous Christian churches that came under Islamic rule as “the Church in the shadow of the Mosque”. Although the conquered Christians outside Arabia continued to be the demographic majority until around the time of the Crusades, legally they were a subdued population, submitted to debilitating conditions².

Guidelines for the status of the Eastern Christian minorities in Islam were provided in the so-called *Pact of ‘Umar*. In a concise definition, this was “the canonical document called *Shūrūt ‘Umar*, i.e. ‘the Conditions of ‘Umar’ (also called ‘the Pact of ‘Umar’, or ‘the Petition to ‘Umar’) which defines the relationship between the Muslim conquerors and the non-Muslim population and delineates the status of the latter in Muslim society”³. According to the Islamic legal tradition, the *Pact* originated in a letter the Christians of Syria addressed to caliph ‘Umar b. al-Khattab (634-644), following the Arab conquest, proposing the conditions for their life under Islamic protection. The caliph confirmed these conditions, with two additions of his own⁴. The origins of this document were subject to much academic debate, with the firm conclusion that the *Pact* could scarcely be dated to the caliphate of ‘Umar, in spite of its name. Most likely it was the result of scholarly legal discussions in the centuries

¹ Christopher MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East. Rough Tolerance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

² Sidney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque. Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008), 11.

³ Milka Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire. From Surrender to Coexistence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 2.

⁴ Mark R. Cohen, “What was the Pact of ‘Umar. A Literary-Historical Study”, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 23 (1999): 100. All quotations from the *Pact of ‘Umar* given in this dissertation are Cohen’s.

following the conquest, when the rules regarding *dhimmīs* needed to be put in writing, with the first version of the text going back to the eight-ninth century, and the *Pact* becoming the norm in dealing with non-Muslims by the second half of the ninth century⁵. The *Pact* was based on “the principle of the *ghiyār*, i.e. the differentiating signs between Muslims and non-Muslims via dress, appearance, and public behavior”⁶. It also established the legal status of non-Muslims as *dhimmīs* or “protected people”, because they enjoyed the protection of Muslims as long as they abided by the obligations established in the *Pact* and paid the *jizya*, “the protection tax” mentioned in the surrender agreements of Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia (although not mentioned in the text of the *Pact*)⁷. Thus, legally, the status of “protected people” translated into social inferiority and submission for non-Muslims. However, in Jerusalem under Islamic rule, the boundaries set by the legal norm could be negotiated.

David Nirenberg has stressed that medieval statements about religious difference “were subject to barter and negotiation”⁸. In the specific case of lands under Islamic rule, the governance of non-Muslims was done through a mix of the stricter enforcement of the law and negotiated exemptions⁹. This appears to be the case of late medieval Jerusalem as well, as will be shown in this chapter.

Christians of Jerusalem and the Holy Land lived as *dhimmīs* since the region was conquered by the Arabs, with Bethlehem passing under their control in 634 and Jerusalem in 638. In the absence of Byzantine support to mount an armed resistance, Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem surrendered the city in the hands of caliph ‘Umar in February 638¹⁰. On their return to the Holy Land in the first half of the fourteenth century, the Latins shared the *dhimmī* status with the rest of the Christians in the country. The provisions of the *Pact of ‘Umar* still conditioned the life of Christians (both Eastern and Latin) in the time of the Mamluk rule in Jerusalem¹¹. This chapter focuses on the Franciscan perception of the ritual

⁵ Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims*, 60-69, 100.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁸ David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence. Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 6.

⁹ Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross. The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 58-59.

¹⁰ Daniel J. Sahas, “The Face to Face Encounter between Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem and the Caliph ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab: Friends or Foes?”, in *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam*, eds. Emmanouela Grypeou, Mark N. Swanson and David Thomas (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2006), 34-39.

¹¹ The Mamluks became lords of Palestine in 1253, and their rule here lasted until the Ottoman conquest of 1517. Schaefer, *Jerusalem in the Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, 260.

dynamics within the Christian community of late medieval Jerusalem, a city under Islamic rule. Provisions of the *Pact of 'Umar* banned the public religious ceremonies of *dhimmīs*, forbidding Christians and other non-Muslims to practice any form of proselytizing.

This ban included the prohibition of rituals that might have made the *dhimmī* communities conspicuous in sight or sound: “We shall not hold public religious ceremonies”; “We shall not display our crosses or our books anywhere in the roads or markets of the Muslims”; “We shall only beat our clappers in our churches very quietly”; “We shall not raise our voices in our church services, nor in the presence of Muslims”; “We shall not go outside on Palm Sunday or Easter, nor shall we raise our voices in our funeral processions”¹². These restrictions impacted mostly the liturgical life of the Christians, curtailing essential ceremonies such as the Palm Sunday processions. A religion bereft of its urban ceremonies, an essential feature of the normal Christian life, was, definitely, in a minority state.

The formal limits imposed on the *dhimmī* populations increased in the Mamluk period (1253-1517) accelerating the demographic decline of Christian communities¹³. However, usually by securing the personal favor of the sultan, the friars managed to stay out of trouble. The notable exceptions were the occasions when they sought martyrdom, as in happened in 1391 with four brethren from the convent of Mount Sion¹⁴, or when they were victims of retaliation, especially after the king of Cyprus sacked Alexandria in 1365¹⁵. Nevertheless, the average tolerance of the Mamluk overlords toward the Franciscans residing in Jerusalem did not preclude their spontaneous harassment by the population¹⁶.

¹² Cohen, “What was the Pact of ‘Umar?”, 107.

¹³ Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow*, 146, 154-155.

¹⁴ In November 1391, the four friars, Deodatus de Ruticinio (from Aquitaine), Nicholaus provincie Slavonie (from Dalmatia), Stephanus de Cunis (from the province of Genoa), Petrus de Narbona (from Provence) asked to see the kadi of Jerusalem. According to the *relatio martyrii* produced by Girard d’Aquitaine, at the time guardian of Mount Sion, the friars delivered a speech before the kadi, attacking Islam and Muhammad, whom they declared a false prophet. They were offered to recant and convert. Refusing, the four brethren were put to death in the public square, in the presence of the other friars and of Latin pilgrims. The rest of the friars were brought before the lord of Gaza and their goods confiscated in retaliation. Isabelle Heullant-Donat, *Les martyrs franciscains de Jérusalem (1391), entre mémoire et manipulation* In: *Chemins d’outre-mer: Études d’histoire sur la Méditerranée médiévale offertes à Michel Balard* [en ligne]. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2004 (généré le 24 août 2016). Disponible sur Internet : <<http://books.openedition.org/psorbonne/3961>>. ISBN : 9782859448271 [last visted: August 2016].

¹⁵ In October 1365, the King of Cyprus, Pierre de Lusignan, attacked and plundered Alexandria. In retaliation, the sultan closed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, destroyed the Franciscan convent on Mount Sion and imprisoned the friars and the pilgrims who were at the time in Jerusalem. Twelve friars were executed. L. Lemmens, *Die Franziskaner auf dem Sion (1336-1551)* (Munster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1919), 63-66.

¹⁶ Saletti, *I francescani in Terrasanta*, 194-195.

The rituals of the Roman Church were introduced to the Holy Land by crusaders. They put an end to the Melkite dominance in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where they made the Latin rite predominant but not exclusive¹⁷. After 1291 and the end of Frankish rule in the Levant, the Latin clergy were excluded from serving in the Holy Land. They returned, in the exclusive form of Franciscan friars, in first half of the fourteenth century.

This chapter traces the story of the Latin Christian presence in the Holy Land in the fifteenth century, considered in the context of the larger Christian minority. I describe this uneasy cohabitation as a permanent state of negotiation between various Christian denominations, all of them arguing for the orthodoxy of their particular theology, liturgy and tradition. I focus on rituals, as they were registered, discussed, denounced or praised by Franciscan friars, the papal-appointed custodians of the Holy Land.

Discussing the rituals of the other Christians, often performed in the nearest vicinity, Christians of the Latin rite routinely compared them with their own rituals, usually for the purpose of reassuring themselves of their own orthodoxy and to denounce the “other’s” errors. It is a case of negotiated identity in the mirror of orthodoxy. Franciscan friars living or visiting Jerusalem in the last centuries of Mamluk rule over the city acted as guides. In that capacity they introduced Western pilgrims and audiences to the other Christian communities present in Jerusalem and the Holy Land at the time. An assessment of the impression made on friars by witnessing these rituals offers an image not only of the practices of Eastern Churches present in Jerusalem, but also of the kind of rituals the friars were performing for those who followed the Latin tradition in the Holy Land, *i.e.* Latin pilgrims. This polemic of gestures that translated different beliefs into action, by means of rituals as well, allowed the friars to build an ideal image of what it meant to be Catholic and Franciscan in the Holy Land during the fifteenth century.

Our guides in this incursion into the life of the Christian minority in the Holy Land are three Franciscan friars: Amedeus Boverii (who travelled to the Holy Land around 1430), Paul Walter of Guglingen (who stayed in the convent of Mount Sion in 1483) and Francesco Suriano (custos in 1493 -1495 and gain in 1512-1515). They wrote in a period when the friars have been installed in Jerusalem already for more than a century, and their stay in Jerusalem

¹⁷ The existence of parallel liturgies within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was described by Christopher MacEvitt as a “Frankish innovation”, because previous to 1099 the Melkites did not admit Jacobites and Armenians to officiate in the church. After the conquest of Jerusalem by Crusader armies, the Latin liturgy was introduced. In the twelfth century the Latins allowed other Christian denominations to officiate in this church, as well. MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World*, 120.

and the Holy Land was longer than the average pilgrimage. They were privileged narrators in other ways as well: they were instructed in theology, observed and even participated in some of the rituals discussed in their accounts. Biased in their descriptions and assessment of the rituals performed by the “others”, the friars were writing with an agenda: assert the orthodoxy of Latin Christianity and rituals and denounce the heterodoxy of those performed by other Christians.

Strong engagement for one’s cause, however, was the dominant feature of writings tackling the issue of the similar other both in the West and in the East. That is why, the most common format for approaching the topic was that of the “list of errors”. Such lists were the usual means of dealing with the differences in liturgy and theology presented by the “other”, forming an independent genre in ecclesiological writing East and West. The friars mostly wrote within the framework of the “list of errors”, with anything alien to their theology or liturgy being featured as such an error¹⁸. The lists were produced especially on two occasions: during moments of acute crisis between East and West (for instance the list of the Patriarch of Constantinople Michael Keroularios after he excommunicated the papal legate Humbert of Silva Candida in 1054¹⁹) or when the (re)unification of the two Churches was attempted. Thomas Aquinas’ *Contra errores Graecorum* was produced in such a context, in 1264, at the request of pope Urban IV, who at the time was negotiating the unification with the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos²⁰. Boverii, Guglingen and Suriano were writing after yet another failed attempt at unity, brought on by the Council of Florence in 1439. To the offended sensibilities of the Latins, listing the errors of those who rejected the union in the terms established at Florence must have made more sense than ever.

The discussion in this chapter is limited to the remits of the Christian community, functioning as a minority in an Islamic city. To understand the friars’ relations with the rest of the Christian community, I start by tracing the genealogy of their theological differences that were translated into the practice of different rituals. I then discuss this ritual alterity by exploring four case studies- the Holy Fire, ritual body marking, judaising Christian rituals and ritual sounds. I chose these four case studies because they illustrate the terms of the encounter between Roman and Eastern Christianities. Writing about them, the friars referred

¹⁸ For the Byzantine lists containing the “errors of the Latins”, see Tia M. Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists. Errors of the Latins* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000). For the Latin lists containing the “errors of the Greeks” see, for instance, the treatise written by Thomans Aquinas: P. Glorieux, ed., *Contra errores Graecorum. S. Thomas d’Aquin Contra errores Graecorum* (Tournai: Desclée, 1957).

¹⁹ Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists*, 11-12.

²⁰ Glorieux, introduction to *Contra erorres Graecorum*, 5-8.

to the recollection of their experiences in Jerusalem. However, their remembrance was shaped in mold of the preestablished interpretative patterns of the polemic between the Roman and Eastern Churches.

1. Background to ritual diversity

The cacophonous diversity of the Christian community in the Holy Land stemmed from the first councils of the Christian Church, which sought to define the canons by which the faithful should regulate their devotional practices. The imperial and episcopal attempt at harmonizing the, by the fifth century, already divided practices and theologies of Christendom, failed, with the Council of Chalcedon of 451 marking a formal point of rupture. In its aftermath, the rift within the Christian community transferred beyond exegetical debates, with the establishment of different churches and separate hierarchies, often times backed by confronting polities, emerging as concrete embodiments of theological differences. These were the Non-Chalcedonian Churches²¹.

This heterogeneity of the institutional and theological landscape of Christendom lasted for centuries and was very much a feature of the Christian community in the period concerned by this study. One obvious way for expressing the dichotomy of different creeds was through ritual. The difference of rituals between Latins and Greek Orthodox stemmed more from diverse liturgical traditions and not so much from patent theological dichotomy (with the exception of *Filioque*), both Churches abiding by the Chalcedonian Creed. On the contrary, when the friars referred to the rites of the non-Chalcedonian Christians, they commented on the greater theological divide separating them.

Rituals constitute a handy tool to defend orthodoxy. Franciscan testimonies concerning the ritual practices of the other Christians in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre incorporated the arguments of the Christological debates from the first Christian centuries, especially the opposing Christological teachings of the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian churches. By the fifteenth century they constituted the core of Latin descriptions of the other Christians in the Holy Land. Moreover, most Latin attempts at ethnographic descriptions of Christian communities in the East were made formulaic by the scholarly background of the

²¹ This is a very simplistic account of a very complex process. For a more generous treating of the subject and exhaustive explanation of the emergence of the non-Chalcedonian Churches, see Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, eds. and trans., *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 1, *General Introduction. Documents before the Council* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007).

authors. For instance, they refer to geographical regions and their inhabitants with toponyms and ethnonyms used by Classical authors. In the Antique tradition, the regions in Southern Egypt were called *India*, *Ethiopia* and *Nubia*. Medieval encyclopedias inherited this tradition. The formulaic contents of medieval pilgrimage accounts owed much to their authors' tradition of instruction²². However, many Western pilgrims who left accounts of their travel to the East, and especially those who had theological training and spent longer periods in the Holy Land, wrote from the perspective of direct witnesses, who have seen these rituals performed and who had the knowledge to interpret them in the light of theology. True, their interpretation and reading of the history of Christian theology took the shape of lengthy apologies for their own Christology and definition of orthodoxy.

The majority of the faithful might not have been familiar with the theological intricacies that split the churches apart: the two natures of Christ, the *Filioque* etc. Rituals, however, made these differences visible. Different observances equaled a different sort of Christianity. Ritual differences functioned as markers of identity and the three friars interpreted them as such. Francesco Suriano, who led the Franciscan community in Jerusalem at the end of the fifteenth century²³, emphasized this function when describing the communities present in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre: "The aforementioned Church of the Holy Sepulchre is inhabited by ten generations of Christians, of various nations, all celebrating the divine office *according to their rite* (italics mine)". The ten Christian denominations were: Franks (represented by the Franciscan friars), Greeks, Georgians, Abyssinians (*sic*), Copts, Jacobites, Syrians or "Christians of the girdle", Armenians, Maronites and Nestorians²⁴.

Franciscan identity in the Holy Land came to be defined not only by direct contact with Islam, but also by measuring one's orthodoxy in what they saw as the heterodoxy of the Christian other. The encounter of Western and Eastern Christians in the Holy Land and especially in the confined space of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was subject to a ceaseless negotiation of the orthodoxy of their particular theologies and liturgies. One way to negotiate was through ritual.

²² Camille Rouxpetel, "Indiens, Éthiopiens et Nubiens dans les récits de pèlerinage occidentaux: entre altérité constatée et altérité construite (XIIIe-XIVe siècles)", *Annales d'Éthiopie* 27 (2012): 71.

²³ Girolamo Golubovich, ed., *Il trattato di Terra Santa e dell'Oriente di frate Francesco Suriano* (Milan: Tipografia Editrice Artigianelli, 1900), XIV-XV.

²⁴ "In la predicta Cheisia del Sancto Sepolchro, habitano dece generatione de religiosi Christiani, de diverse natione, e tuti celebrano el divino officio secundo il rito loro". *Ibid.*, 64.

Guglingen treated extensively the question of ritual otherness²⁵. In his description of *De Iacobinis et eorum erroribus habitantibus Iherusalem*, the friar discussed the most serious transgression imputed to all non-Chalcedonian Churches, namely their belief in the existence of a single nature in Christ. Thus, his discussion of the “Jacobite error” applies to Ethiopians and Copts as well. It was truly what made the rift between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians patent:

The fourth error is that they assert [the existence of] a single nature in Christ, as of a single person. Because of this, they were excommunicated and condemned by the Council of Chalcedon as heretics. Their fifth error and the worst is that they believe and affirm that Christ, after the Assumption, did not exist in two natures, but that only the divine nature remained in him. This error was introduced by Eutices, an abbot from Constantinople. Others, on the contrary, say that [after the Incarnation] the two natures of Christ became one nature. The authors of this error were two bishops of Alexandria, namely Theodosius and Galanus [Gaius]. It is, however, clear that, according to [his] human nature, Christ experienced hunger and thirst and had other needs, [and] he even suffered death on the cross. But, according to his divine nature, he resurrected the dead and performed other virtuous acts and miracles, as he said of himself: ‘Before Abraham was, I am’, and again: ‘Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning’, and again: ‘I and my Father are one’. But according to [his] human nature he said: ‘My Father is greater than I’, and also: ‘Not as I will, but as thou wilt’. *These perverted heretics cross themselves with only one finger* (italics mine). Thus the Greeks and the Syrians accuse them that they act so in accordance with their belief, that there is only one nature in Christ. But they [the Jacobites] reject this accusation and say that by the single finger they prove their belief in the single divine essence of God, while those who made the sign of the cross with three [fingers] demonstrate their belief in the Trinity of Persons united in divine essence, that was not made manifest in him [Christ]²⁶.

²⁵ I thank Marianne Ritsema van Eck, who has worked extensively on this manuscript, for signaling Paul Walter of Gulgingen as a treasure of details for the Holy Land rituals.

²⁶ “Quartus error est quod in Christo tantum unam naturam asserentes sicut unam personam. Huiusmodi cum heretici in concilio Chalcedonensi excommunicati sunt et condemnati. Quintus error pessimus est quod tenent et asserunt Christum post assumptionem humane nature non ex duabus nature existere, sed solum in eo divinam naturam permanere. Hunc errorem introduxit Eutices, Constantinopolitanus abbas. Alii autem dicunt ex duabus naturis in Christo unam factam naturam. Et huius erroris auctores existerunt quidam Alexandrini episcopi scilicet Theodosius et Galanus. Constat autem quod, secundum naturam humanitatis, Dominus Iesus esurivit et sitiivit et alias necessitates sustinuit, mortem etiam crucem pertulit. Secundum vero naturam divinitatis, mortuos suscitavit et alias virtutes et miracula operatus est, secundum quam ipse dixit de se: ‘Antequam Abraham fieret, ego sum’ [Jn. 8,58], et iterum: ‘Ego principium, qui et loquor vobis’ [Jn. 8,25], et rursum: ‘Ego et pater unum sumus’ [Jn. 10,30]. Secundum autem humanam naturam idem ait: ‘Pater maior me est’ [Jn. 14,28], et iterum: ‘Non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu vis’ [Matt. 26,39]. *Isti perversi heretici tantum uno digito se signant*. Et sicut Greci et Suriani accusantes eos quod propter unam naturam quam in Christo credunt faciunt. Ipsi vero negant et dicunt quod propter unum digitum demonstrent se credere in Deo unam divinam essentiam, et in tribus partibus [partibus] facientes crucem designent se credere trinitatem personarum in unitate divine essencie, et in illo non exerant”. MS 04/Hs.INR 10 Staatliche Bibliothek Neuburg an der Donau, 356.

Francesco Suriano also recorded concisely what he considered to be the essential and identifying feature of the Jacobites: “These [the Jacobites] uphold only one nature in Christ. They cross themselves with only one finger. These are more perfidious heretics than all others”²⁷. The logical chain is clear: Miaphysite beliefs made visible in alien rituals equaled heresy. Guglingen and Suriano used “heresy” to label those Jerusalemite Christians who did not obey the Roman Church in the sense ascribed to this notion in the Christological debates of the first centuries. The friars deemed them heretics because they did not uphold the “correct” creed.

The acceptance and rejection of the acts of the Council of Chalcedon (451) is at the origin of the theological and liturgical rift within Christianity. The two friars emphasized the main point of contention between Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian churches, namely the nature of the divinity of Christ. The Council of Chalcedon adopted the Christology of pope Leo (440-461), which stated that Christ existed in two natures, divine and human, also after the Incarnation. This Chalcedonian Definition of Faith was resisted by the supporters of a miaphysite²⁸ Christology²⁹. The majority of Christians in Egypt, Palestine and Syria rejected the Christology of Chalcedon, which led to the formation of separate ecclesiastical structures in the following century. In the aftermath of Chalcedon, there were miaphysite churches in Armenia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt and Ethiopia³⁰. The segregation was mainly the result of policies led by emperors Justin I and Justinian, who tried to impose the acceptance of the Chalcedonian Definition of Faith in the Oriental Patriarchates. The ultimate split was determined by the *libellus* of pope Hormisdas (514-523), sent to Constantinople in 515, asking that all bishops considered heretical (*i.e.* who rejected Chalcedon) cease to be commemorated by churches in the East. After his ascension in 518, emperor Justin I, enforced the *libellus* of Hormisdas. The emperor’s decision determined the bishops who adhered to the Miaphysite theology of Severus of Antioch to establish a separate non-Chalcedonian hierarchy. The rift was made permanent by emperor Justinian’s attempts at

²⁷ “Questi tengono in Christo una sola natura. Questi se fan il signo de la croce cum uno deto solo. Questi sono li più perfidi heretici de tuti l’altri”. *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, 78.

²⁸ “Miaphysite- ‘one-nature’. The term is a recent coinage, intended to replace ‘monophysite’, that is derogatory and unacceptable to those so designated. Miaphysite Christology, which is still the doctrine of the Oriental Orthodox Churches (that include the Copts and the Armenians), rejects the Chalcedonian formula of two natures in Christ, and insists that he is one nature, in the sense of a single being, albeit possessing both divine and human attributes.” Price and Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 3, 208-209.

²⁹ Volker L. Menze, *Justinian and the Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7; Price and Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 1, 46-53; Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow*, 134.

³⁰ Price and Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 1, 55-56.

reconciliation. The council he summoned in Constantinople in 536 condemned definitely those who rejected the teachings of the Council of Chalcedon³¹. This initial spilt led to the formation in the following centuries of the Jacobite (Syrian Orthodox)³², Coptic and Ethiopian Churches.

The Council of Chalcedon dramatically shaped the landscape of division within Christendom. However, many Eastern communities separated from the conciliar and imperial church previously: the Armenians created their own hierarchy after the Council of Nicaea (325) whilst “Nestorians” separated after the Council of Ephesus (431). Even the Chalcedonian community of the East continued to be torn apart, mainly on the subject of the imperial influence in defining the doctrine of the Church. It was the case of the Maronite Church that had accepted the teaching of the Council of Chalcedon but rejected the fifth (553) and the sixth (680/ 681) Councils of Constantinople. Their refusal came from the rejection of imperial interference in matters of faith but also because their patriarch, Macarius of Antioch, was a supporter of “Monothelism”, a doctrine condemned by the sixth Council. This spilt resulted in the establishment of a separate Maronite hierarchy in the eight century³³.

The Eastern Christians living in Palestine, who accepted Chalcedon and the imperial implication in the Church, were labeled by their adversaries “Melkites”, a term loosely designating those who have remained faithful to the emperor in Constantinople³⁴. All these branches of Christianity were represented in Jerusalem and the friars left accounts of their interactions with them.

When Latins came to the Levant they faced what has been described as “the heresiographical milieu of Christian denominationalism in the Islamic world”³⁵, that is a Christian community in which pretty much everyone accused one another of heresy. The Latins’ arrival exacerbated this landscape of division, which resulted in the addition of one

³¹ Menze, *Justinian and the Making*, 7-18, 186-191; Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow*, 132-133.

³² The miaphysite church in Syria was called “Jacobite” by its adversaries after the name of bishop Jacob Baradeus (c. 500-578), supporter of the miaphysite Christology of patriarchs Cyril of Alexandria and Severus of Antioch, who contributed fundamentally to the installment of a non-Chalcedonian hierarchy in the Syriac-speaking milieu. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow*, 134-136; Price and Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 1, 53. Today this church is designated as the *Syrian Orthodox Church*, the term “Jacobite” being deemed derogatory. Menze, *Justinian and the Making*, 3. However, I will use the term “Jacobite” in this paper, because this is the term which appears in the sources on which I base my research. It would be confusing to speak of “Syrian Orthodox” when the text I work on uses exclusively “Jacobite”.

³³ Sidney H. Griffith, “‘Melkites’, ‘Jacobites’ and the Christological Controversies in Arabic in Third/Ninth-Century Syria”, in *Syrian Christians under Islam. The First Thousand Years*, ed. David Thomas (Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill, 2001), 45-48.

³⁴ Idem, *The Church in the Shadow*, 138.

³⁵ Griffith, “‘Melkites’, ‘Jacobites’”, 9, 54-55.

more strand of Christianity in the daily negotiation of orthodoxy in Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

Doctrinal disagreement was reflected in the existence of a variety of liturgies. All Eastern rites originated in the Antiochene and Alexandrian liturgies. Out of this, as they started to differ in doctrinal teachings, the communities developed different liturgies: the Antiochene rite characterized the Jacobite liturgy, the Alexandrian rite was practiced in the Coptic and Ethiopian churches, the East Syrian rite of Edessa was adopted by Nestorians in Syria and Iraq, and the Byzantine rite was followed by Melkites³⁶. In Jerusalem and Bethlehem these communities shared the space of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Church of the Nativity, where they carried out their liturgies side by side but very seldom together.

Although Melkites feature preeminently in the dislikes of the friars, this was mainly due to what they denounced as the hubris of the Greeks, who dared to deny the primacy of the Roman bishop and excommunicate him and the Latin Christians every Easter³⁷. However, what the friars found truly alien to their own theology and rituals were the theologies and rituals of the non-Chalcedonians. As Guglingen's discussion makes clear, to a Latin Christian they represented the perverted version of their own (Chalcedonian) creed. The deviancy manifested itself most vividly in a difference of rituals. Guglingen listed Miaphysitism as the fourth error committed by the Jacobites, an error for which they had been excommunicated as heretics by the Council of Chalcedon. The fifth heretical teaching held by Jacobites and "the worst" (*pessimus*) was their belief that "Christ after the Assumption did not exist in two natures, but that only the divine nature remained in him". The heresiarch behind this transgression was named Eutyches, a Constantinopolitan archimandrite. In 448 Eutyches' orthodoxy was put on trial before the synod of the Constantinopolitan church. His opponents accused him of refusing to admit that Christ existed in two natures after the Incarnation. In November 448 the synod condemned him for heresy. Eutyches appealed this decision but his condemnation was made definitive by pope Leo's support of the synod that condemned him, and by the anathematization of his teachings by the Council of Chalcedon³⁸.

³⁶ Peter D. Day, *Eastern Christian Liturgies. The Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian and Syrian Rites. Eucharistic rites with Introductory Notes and Rubrical Instructions* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1972), 1-6.

³⁷ "Ogni anno lo venere sancto publicamente excomunicano el Papa de Roma, cum tuti quelli che li credono, como excomunicati heretici e maledecti; e tuto el popolo responde: *Anathema nachusi*, zioè siano maledecti." *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, 72.

³⁸ Price and Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 1, 25-30.

Guglingen's elaboration on the fifth error continued with the discussion of other Miaphysite teachings, namely that after Incarnation Christ had only one nature. The authors of this heresy are named as Theodosius and Galanus (Gaianus) both non-Chalcedonian bishops of Alexandria, although with different doctrines, Theodosius being a Severian (follower of Severus of Antioch) and Gaianus a Julianist (follower of Julian of Halicarnasus), both elected and deposed in 536³⁹. The text continues with the argument for the orthodoxy of the two-nature Christology being made with relevant evangelical quotations. The discussion of the fifth error ends with a focus on gestures, specifically on the Jacobite (and generally Miaphysite) blessing with one finger. In his discussion of the Jacobite errors Guglingen followed Jacques de Vitry's *Historia Orientalis*⁴⁰. However, his account diverged from the textual authority of the bishop of Acre where the German friar felt the need to make his refutation of the Jacobite heresy more poignant, by using a stronger language than his predecessor's, probably under the heat of witnessing himself such deviancy: "These perverted heretics cross themselves with only one finger" (*Isti perversi heretici tantum uno digito se signant*). Thus, after he listed one more Jacobite heresy (regarding the Eucharist), Guglingen finished his discussion of this particular Christian community with the following remark: "I saw this being done [he means the Jacobite communion] with my own eyes, on Mount Sion, in the feast of the Pentecost, AD 1483, when these [the Jacobites] and other [Christian] nations celebrated office together with us [the friars of Mount Sion]"⁴¹.

³⁹ Menze, *Justinian and the Making*, 189; Edward R. Hardy, "The Egyptian Policy of Justinian", *Dumbarton Oaks* 22 (1968): 33-34.

⁴⁰ "Cum autem a Grecis et Surianis diligenter inquireremus ob quam causam Iacobitas detestarentur et eos a suo eiecissent consortio, hanc esse causam precipuam asserebant quod in damnatam et pessimam heresim incidissent, unam naturam tantum quemadmodum unam personam in Christo esse asserentes. Huiusmodi enim heretici in concilio Chalcedonensi excommunicati sunt et condemnati. Quorum quidam perverse asserebant Christum post humanam assumptionem non ex duabus naturis existere, sed solum in eo divinam naturam permanere. Hunc errorem introduxit Eutyches, Constantinopolitanus abbas. Alii autem ex duabus naturis, unam in Christo asserunt naturam. Quidam Alexandrini episcopi, Theodosius scilicet et Galanus, huius erroris authores extiterunt. Constat autem quod secundum naturam humanitatis Dominus Iesus Christus esurivit et sitiivit et alias necessitates sustinuit, mortem etiam in cruce pertulit. Secundum naturam divinitatis mortuos suscitavit et alias virtutes operatus est, secundum quam ipse de se dixit: 'Antequam Abraham fieret, ego sum'. Et iterum: 'Ego principium qui et loquor vobis'. Et rursus: 'Ego et Pater unum sumus'. Secundum humanam naturam idem ait: 'Pater maior me est'. Et iterum de calice transferendo: 'Non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu vis'. Cum autem diligentissime a predictis Iacobinis inquisissem utrum unam tantum in Christo naturam esse affirmarent, ipsi nescio si timore vel alia ratione ducti negaverunt. Cum autem quererem quare uno tantum digito se signarent, respondebant quod unitate digiti unam divinam essentiam tribus autem partibus Trinitatem designabant, in nomine Trinitatis et unitatis signaculo crucis sese munientes. Greci tamen et Suriani eis obiciebant quod propter unitatem nature quam in Christo credebant, uno tantum digito se signarent". J. Donnadieu, ed. and French trans., *Iacobus de Vitriaco. Historia orientalis* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2008), 76, 308-310.

⁴¹ "Hoc ego vidi fieri oculis meis in Monte Sion in festo Pentachoste, anno Domini 1483, tunc ipsi et alie nationes fecerunt officium nobiscum". MS 04/Hs.INR 10 Staatliche Bibliothek Neuburg an der Donau, 356.

The four case studies presented below illustrate how the friars interpreted this polemic of gestures and the role of rituals in spinning the us-and-them narrative.

2. The Holy Fire

Perhaps the most contentious ritual performed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was and remains the descent of the Holy Fire on Holy Saturday. The miraculous lightening of the lamps in the Sepulchre on Holy Saturday presented fifteenth-century Christians (as it does today) with the chance of experiencing what Camille Rouxpetel has defined as the “*aléterité interne*”, namely of facing the beliefs and rituals of other branches of Christianity⁴². The descent of fire from heaven in the Holy Sepulchre was first mentioned, by Christian and Muslim sources, in late ninth century, with the latter describing it as a ruse invented by the former⁴³.

The origins of this tradition remain obscure, but it might be linked to the ritual lighting of the pascal candle in the Latin Easter vigil. The Jerusalem Holy Fire could be an adjustment of this Roman ritual brought to Jerusalem by Frankish monks in the ninth century. The eight-ninth centuries in Palestine saw the decline of the Christian community in Jerusalem, with many churches destroyed and abandoned. In these circumstances, the Judean monastic communities and the patriarch sought financial assistance both in Byzantium and in the West. Thus, it is probably in this context of contacts with Latin Europe that the ritual of the Holy Fire initiated in Jerusalem⁴⁴.

On Good Friday the Sepulchre was cleansed, all lamps put out and the door sealed. Christians from Jerusalem and monks from the Judean monasteries gathered to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where the patriarch led the office of the Holy Saturday, waiting for the miraculous descent of the Holy Fire that traditionally happened at the ninth hour. The patriarch entered the Sepulchre and shared the light with the faithful present in the church, who took it to churches, monasteries, and their own houses⁴⁵.

⁴² Rouxpetel, “Indiens, Éthiopiens et Nubiens”, 71.

⁴³ Marius Canard, “La destruction de l’Église de la Résurrection par le calife Hākim et l’histoire de la descente du feu sacré”, *Byzantion* XXXV (1965): 28, 34-35.

⁴⁴ Andrew Jotischky, “Holy Fire and Holy Sepulchre: Ritual and Space in Jerusalem from the Ninth to the Fourteenth Centuries”, in *Ritual and Space in the Middle Ages. Proceedings of the 2009 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Frances Andrews (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2011), 49-51.

⁴⁵ Renata Salvarani, *Il Santo Sepolcro a Gerusalemme. Riti, testi e racconti tra Costantino e l’età delle crociate* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2012), 212-224.

The first contact of Latin Christians with this Jerusalemite tradition was on Easter 1101, when the miracle failed to occur in the accustomed manner. The narrative of the 1101 Easter testifies to the rifts dividing Franks and Eastern Christians. This remained a regular feature of their engagement around the miracle of the Holy Fire. Easter 1101 happened in the second year of the Latin rule in Jerusalem. If in their first Easter in Jerusalem the conquerors partook in the liturgy conducted by Melkites in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, by 1101 the office had suffered alterations meant to reflect Latin supremacy in the city, with the new Latin patriarch leading the ceremonies⁴⁶. The miracle was finally produced on Easter Sunday 1101, after much supplication, but the delay was interpreted differently by the involved parties: as a sign of the unworthiness and sin of the Latins who usurped the place of the Greeks in the service of the Holy Sepulchre (by Eastern Christians)⁴⁷, as a confirmation of the righteousness of their cause as protectors of the Holy Land and local Christians who did not need the miracle after their arrival (by Latins)⁴⁸, and as an opportunity to deal with a political enemy (by king Baldwin)⁴⁹.

Different narratives developed around the miracle (or its absence) serving the particular agendas of their authors' communities. The meeting of various branches of Christianity as witnesses of the miracle of the Holy Fire was fraught with enmity, providing all parties with a means to expostulate with their similar other about the rectitude of the type of Christianity they professed, which the Holy Fire was supposed to sanction. Thus, the miracle remained a constant in the polemic narratives of Eastern and Western Christians, even after pope Gregory IX denounced its veracity and forbade, in 1238, Latin Christians to partake in the ceremony⁵⁰. By the fifteenth century, in the accounts left by Latin witnesses, the ceremony was reduced to a rhetorical tool, fit to denounce the irrationality and heresy of the Greeks.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 217. Camille Rouxpetel speaks about the "latinisations des lieux saints". Rouxpetel, "Trois récits occidentaux de la descente du feu sacré au Saint-Sépulcre (Pâques 1101): polyphonie chrétienne et stratégies discursives", *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 126-1 (2014): 5-6.

⁴⁷ Salvarani, *Il Santo Sepolcro*, 217; MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World*, 118.

⁴⁸ Fulcher of Chartres, chaplain of the first king of Jerusalem, Baldwin I and canon of the Holy Sepulchre, wrote that the miracle was necessary when local Christians needed it to prove the truth of their faith to Muslims, but after the Franks freed and took them under protection, the occurrence of the miracle did not hold the same urgency. Thus, the Latins were the *successores ipsius ignis*. Rouxpetel, "Trois récits occidentaux", 9-10.

⁴⁹ The failure of Daibert of Pisa, the Latin patriarch, to produce the miracle provided Baldwin I with another argument in his efforts to have him deposed. The king took advantage of the discredit that befell the patriarch to get rid of Daibert who opposed him succeeding his brother, Godfrey of Bouillon, as king of Jerusalem. MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World*, 116-119.

⁵⁰ Salvarani, *Il Santo Sepolcro*, 212.

The three Franciscan accounts discussed here illustrate how the miracle of the Holy Fire was perceived by the Latin community of the Holy Sepulchre at the time, fraught with old prejudices but also testifying to a careful, although biased, assessment of the rituals performed by the “other”. Incidentally, the accounts of the Holy Fire are one of the rare subjects on which the authors break from the formulaic narratives left by previous authoritative sources. Apparently, this was a disruptive enough phenomenon to shock them into personal remarks.

Amedeus Boverii started by giving a description of the event, with the fire descending secretly (*occulte*) in the Sepulchre:

Likewise, on the night of the Resurrection a torch of fire appeared from above in this Sepulchre. To commemorate this event, on the same day, a fire is mysteriously lit and showed to the world from the window [of the Sepulchre]. This custom has been greatly abused and misrepresented. For now, the Saracens close the Sepulchre and people gather before the main gates to celebrate, as Greeks and other nations, with the exception of Latins, process around the Sepulchre with chants. Their priests are carried in on shoulders by four men, bearing candles in their hands and asking for fire from heaven. And after the procession is finished, Saracens run through the aforementioned gate and knock on it with sticks, as those vile heretics and schismatics [the Greeks] have showed them to, whilst secretly one of the Saracens enters the chapel and shows the light at the window from afar to all who are gathered there, fretting like animals. And the one who reaches the gate of the Sepulchre first is considered a blessed man by them. And after wicks and candles have been, with great difficulty, lit, they touch their faces and hands with that fire that they consider holy, because they strongly believe it descends from heaven. Which is a great scandal to the faith, because those dirty dogs [the Saracens] laugh at them [the Eastern Christians] and say that they are men of little faith, whilst the Latins are perfect in their faith. This is what I heard being told⁵¹.

Boverii saw the phenomenon as a tradition of the Jerusalemite church, which he could accept as a local custom, but which he felt obliged to reject as a genuine miracle. Thus,

⁵¹ “Item in isto sepulcro in nocte surrectionis ignis facem desuper apparuit, ad cuius memoriam omni ano simul die ignis occulte incenditur et per fenestram foris ostenditur. Ex qua consuetudine facta est abusio et illusio magna. Nam modo Sarraceni sepulcrum claudunt et ante eius hostium maiorem conegregantur in signum sollempnitatis, ut Greci et cetere naciones, exceptis Latinis, cum hymnis et canticis, processionaliter circumcidant sepulcrum cantando. Accedunt sacerdotes eorum super quatuor homines in altum portantes, qui stupas in manibus gerunt ignem de celo querentes. Et complecta omni processione, Saraceni ante portam predictam quomodo in se faciunt fugentes se cum baculis velle verberari et in cumque illi heretici et schismatici pessimi ad Saracenos ostendunt, clam aliquis Sarracenorum capellam intrat et a remotis per fenestram luminum ostendit ad quam omnes velud bruta ad salturam. Et qui pimus ad illam portam pervenire, beatus apud eos videtur esse. Et cum scilicet suis stupis et candelis cum magna difficultate lumen accedunt, faciem et manus ex igne tangentes velud esset sanctissimus et ferma fide tenentur illum de celo descendissem. In qua magnam fidei opprobrium, quoniam illi canes immundi ipsos derident et asserunt eos esse modice fidei et Latinos in sua fide perfectos. Prout audivi”. MS BNF Latin 4826, 36r.

he used the word “custom” to describe it, whilst he usually referred to liturgical traditions associated to the Holy Sepulchre by *misterium*. Moreover, he stressed that this mere custom “has been greatly abused and misrepresented” (*ex qua consuetudine facta est abusio et illusio magna*), its significance being manipulated into a pseudo-miracle. In this he was seconded by Guglingen, who called the whole thing a sham (*illa truffa*)⁵².

What Boverii found most disruptive was the involvement of Muslims in the production of this sham, which could only belittle the credibility of all Christians in the Holy Land. He blamed the Greeks, who in their hubris tried to prove the superiority of their brand of Christianity by determining the production of the miracle at the hands of their patriarch, of employing Muslims to enter the sealed Sepulchre and deceitfully lit the Holy Fire. To him this was an offence to the faith and a disruptive scandal to the Christian community, because it provided their enemies with a chance to laugh at them and to point out the feebleness of Christian faith. However, the friar was careful to note that this observation applied only to Greeks, as Muslims held the faith of the Latins to be “perfect”. The last remark made by the Dauphinois friar on the matter of the Holy Sepulchre, namely *prout audivi*, indicates that he probably didn’t partake in the ceremony but registered what was the common lore on the topic among the friars serving in the Holy Sepulchre.

In calling the miracle a scam, the friars were inadvertently in agreement with the Muslim opinion on the topic. Although the ceremony was attended by high ranking Muslim officials, Arab Muslim historians usually disregarded it as a ruse. They even explained the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by al-Hākīm in 1009 by the caliph’s rage at the Christian reverence towards this trickery⁵³.

In Suriano’s account we have a somewhat more colorful description of the Holy Fire, leading to a similar conclusion: this was a sham born out of Greek hubris, in which the friars did not believe and which they interpreted as a proof of the heresy of the “quelle nation” (*i.e.* the Eastern Christians). Explaining the layout of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the presence of an opening (window) in the gallery, Suriano offered a glimpse into how the descent of the Holy Fire was perceived by the friars⁵⁴. Thus, the creation of this opening was

⁵² MS 04/Hs.INR 10 Staatliche Bibliothek Neuburg an der Donau, 353.

⁵³ Canard, “La destruction de l’Église”, 20-24.

⁵⁴ “Questa apertura de la tribuna per doe casone principalmente fo facta. La prima per dar lume alla chiesa, però che, como te ho dicto, lo terreno soprasta, et non se li po fa fenestre. L’altra si è, come ho lecto ne l’Ordinario de lo officio divino, che se faceva in questa chiesa el Sabato sancto circa l’hora terza omni anno,

dictated by the necessity to allow some more light into the Sepulchre and to allow the descent of “fire from heaven” (*foco dal zielo*) on Holy Saturday. He had read about this tradition in the old *Ordinary* of the Church, by which he most likely meant the office of the crusader period when Latin Christians partook in the event⁵⁵. Both the enthusiasm of the faithful when the miracle was timely bestowed and their clamorous disappointment when the fire failed to descend from heaven at the accustomed time (as it happened in 1101) were vividly described by Suriano.

He made a clear distinction among these traditions observed in the old days (*antiquamente*) by the entire Christian community and the custom of his own days, when this particular celebration pertained exclusively to Eastern Christians. The discussion dedicated to the “fire from heaven” ended with a strong emphasis on the friars’ lack of involvement in the celebration, because “in their opinion” the fire did not have a divine origin and did not descend from heaven, and it was due to their sins and heresy that the other Christian nations believed this fallacy to be a miracle. Suriano continued by recording what the friars were doing while all this was happening in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (*in quell medesimo tempo*). It follows that the brethren were locked in the church with the other Christians from Good Friday to Easter Sunday, with the friars conducting services on the Calvary and in the Sepulchre, separately from what was going on around them⁵⁶.

From his description it appears that Suriano witnessed the ceremony of the Holy Fire, which he recorded through the pre-established interpretative framework of us-and-them, as an indicator of the heterodoxy of Eastern Christians, with, however, the addition of some personal spiteful remarks about the Greeks.

visibilmente descendeva el foco dal zielo, sopra lo sancto Sepolchro, et accendeva tute le lampade, similiter lo Cerio paschale. Laso stare la preparazione che faceva quello tale che era deputato alla ministracione del predicto foco divino: Li chridori et pianti che facevano li populi, quando tal dono li era concesso da Dio. Postpongo le lachryme che per componctione butavano et dolceza. Similiter li grida al cielo, pianti, lamenti, et dolori che faceano, quando secundo et solito tardava ad ascendere, como indegni de tanta gratia. Quello stillo et modo que antiquamente se usava, usano et tengono al presente quelli christiani del paese. Et convengono de lo Hedypto, Syria, Pamphilis, Mesopotamia, Capadocia, Grecia, Armenia et Libano, homini et donne alla predicta solennità et festa de Sabato Sancto. La qual chiamano Le id el nar zioé vuol dire: La festa del foco. Non però descende lo predicto foco, secondo la verità (et opinione de nui frati), per ben che tute le altre natione, excepto nui frati, fingono questa falsità esser vera. La privatione de la qual gratia existi(mo), che sia per li peccati et heresie de quelle natione”. *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, 30.

⁵⁵ The so-called “Ritual of Barletta”, a liturgical book used during the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, described the ceremony of the Holy Fire. Nicola Bux, “La liturgia del Fuoco sacro dal Santo Sepolcro di Gerusalemme al Laterano di Roma”, in *Le rotonde del Santo Sepolcro: un itinerario europeo*, eds. Piero Pierotti, Carlo Tosco and Caterina Zannella (Bari: Edipuglia, 2015), 213-216.

⁵⁶ “In quel medesimo tempo li frati di monte Syon stano renchiusi intro la predicta chiesa con tute quelle natione lo Venerdi et sabbato sancto et la Domenica mane de la resurrectione; et facemo lo offitio sopra el monte Calvario (lo venerdi sancto), et sul sancto sepolchro la risurrectione de Christo”. *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, 31.

What the fifteenth century accounts discussed here seem to make clear is that the perception of the miracle of the Holy Fire by the community of Latin Christians in Jerusalem continued in the strain established in Western narratives after pope Gregory IX's 1238 interdict, namely using this tradition as a means of underscoring the error of Eastern Christians. This watershed moment explains the contradicting observations, such as those left by Francesco Suriano, who appeared to agree with the tradition of the Holy Fire when practiced by Latins during their reign in Jerusalem, but was quite ready to disown it in his own time. Born by direct observance infused in formulaic traditions, the Latin narrative of the Holy Fire underlines the polemical nature of the Christian coexistence in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

3. **Ritual body marking** ⁵⁷

Close to Jaffa Gate, in Jerusalem's Old City, there is a small tattoo parlor whose trade is quite different from your regular ink shop. The parlor, run by the Razzouk family for generations, provides religious tattoos, that is in inked stamps of pilgrimage. Throughout the long history of their shop, the Razzouks have catered mainly to Eastern Christians, Copts, Syrians, Ethiopians, Armenians, for whom these tattoos functioned as pilgrimage badges⁵⁸. The pilgrimage badge tattoo became popular with European pilgrims only in the sixteenth century⁵⁹. The history of Christian religious body marking in the Holy Land, however, goes back as far as Late Antiquity. This usage of tattoos or of marks obtained by cauterization in a Christian religious context was made familiar to the West through texts describing the wonders and peoples of the East, especially in the crusader period. They were uncovered by writings such as the *Travels* of Marco Polo⁶⁰ or by a host of authors who lived in the Levant and came to know its people, such as Jacques de Vitry, bishop of Acre (1216-1227), Magister

⁵⁷ Ritual branding could be integrated to the category which has been described as "rites de signation, d'onction et, plus généralement, de marquage corporel dans le christianisme ancien." Luc Renaut, *Marquage Corporel et signation religieuse dans l'Antiquité*, (PhD dissertation École Pratique des Hautes Études, 2004), vol. 1, 611.

⁵⁸ Febe Armanios, *Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 114, 208.

⁵⁹ Robert Ousterhout, "Permanent Ephemera: The 'Honorable' Stigmatisation of Jerusalem Pilgrims", *Between Jerusalem and Europe: Essays in Honour of Bianca Kühnel*, eds. Renana Bartal and Hanna Vorholt (Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill, 2015), 103.

⁶⁰ The description of the Abyssinian Christians reads like this in Marco Polo's *Travels*: "And now let us turn to the great province Abyssinia, which is Middle India. You must know that the chief king of all this province is a Christian. And the other kings of the province, who are subject to him, number six, of whom three are Christians and three Saracens. The Christians of this province are distinguished by three marks on their faces, one from the forehead to the middle of the nose and one on either cheek. These marks are made by branding with a hot iron. And this is their baptism; for after they have been baptized in water, they are burned with this sign, which is a token of rank and a completion of the baptism. This is done when they are small; and they regard the custom not only as a badge of dignity, but also as an aid to health". Ronald Latham, trans., *The Travels of Marco Polo* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978), 303-304.

Thietmar (pilgrim in the Holy Land in 1217-1218), and, from the first half of the fourteenth century, by travelers such as Iacopo da Verona, Ludolph of Sudheim or Niccolò da Poggibonsi⁶¹.

When Latin Christians saw a religious tattoo or a branded mark adorning the bodies of their Eastern counterparts, they perceived it as a distinctive sign of alterity. In the West, the Church managed to uproot the practice of religious tattoos, considered pagan and superstitious⁶². The Roman Church continued thus the earlier tradition, of the Classical Antiquity, when Greeks and Romans denounced religious tattooing and branding, practiced primarily in the Eastern Mediterranean, as a sign of barbarity or servitude⁶³. By the Late Middle Ages, in the West, branding or tattooing religious marks became associated with Eastern Christianity, more precisely with its heterodoxy. However, the absence of such body marks among Latin Christians made for a very attractive topic to write about when they observed it in the East.

Latin pilgrims and temporary settlers, such as the friars of Mount Sion, noticed the double function of these body marks. They were identity marks, meant to distinguish Christians within the Muslim majority; they were also interpreted as corporal marks resulted from the practice of heterodox rituals in the Eastern Churches, such as the much quoted “baptism by fire” (*baptizmus per ignem*). Although the friars recorded the first function, they truly dedicated their attention and polemical vim to the latter.

The rich Late Antique tradition of religious body marking continued in the East after the adoption of Christianity, adapting to the new religion. In some parts of the recently Christianized Roman world, especially in areas where religious tattooing had long existed in the cults of pagan deities, such as those of Attis and Cybele, the practice assumed a new veneer⁶⁴. Christians who adopted tattooing or branding as a religious act justified the practice by referring to those biblical passages that seemed to refer to the physical marking of the

⁶¹ Rouxepetel, “Indiens, Éthiopiens et Nubiens”, 71-83.

⁶² For instance, the canons of the Council of Northumberland (787) condemned the tattoos, apparently still popular among local Christians, as pagan and superstitious. Franz Josphe Dölger, “Die Kreuz-Tätowierung im christlichen Altertum”, *Antike und Christentum: Kultur und religionsgeschichtliche Studien*, vol. 1 (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 1974), 203.

⁶³ C. P. Jones, “Tattooing and Branding in Graeco-Roman Antiquity”, *Journal of Roman Studies* 77 (1987): 144-152.

⁶⁴ Susanna Elm has pointed out that the areas where religious tattooing related to the cults of Attis and Cybele was customary coincide with those regions where religious tattooing was popular among Christians, especially among the Montanists of Asia Minor. Susanna Elm, “‘Pierced by Bronze Needles’: Anti-Montanist Charges of Ritual Stigmatization in Their Fourth-Century Context”, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996): 423-424.

body, especially to the letters of St Paul (Cor. 1, 21-22; Eph. 1, 13-14; Eph. 4, 30)⁶⁵ and the Gospel of St Matthew (3,11). The “seal of the Holy Spirit” mentioned by St Paul was interpreted by some Christian groups, especially by some Gnostic sects, as the imprint of a physical mark through tattooing or branding. The orthodox church, that is those Christians upholding the *Creed* of the ecumenical councils, firmly condemned this view as heretical⁶⁶.

The theme of the baptism by fire originated in this passage from St Matthew: ‘He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire’ (3,11). The orthodox interpretation of this passage was spiritual, whilst some Christian groups understood the reference to the baptism with fire as a marking of the body with material fire, usually in the form of branding that followed the canonical baptism by water. Such a baptism is described in the *Books of Jeu*, dated probably to the fourth century AD, written in Coptic in the environment of a Christian Gnostic sect. In this text the baptism of fire is administered by Jesus, “who sealed them on their foreheads with the seal of the virgin of the light, that which makes them be numbered within the kingdom of light. And the disciples rejoiced, for they had received the baptism of fire along with the seal that forgives sins”⁶⁷.

The ritual branding of the body by the Gnostics as a complement to baptism was greatly bemoaned by Church Fathers. Irenaeus of Lyon and Clement of Alexandria, writing in the second century, imputed the branding of the ear of the newly baptized by the followers of Carpocrates of Alexandria (a second century Gnostic)⁶⁸.

The other major usage of body marks in a Christian context was as markers of identity: they could signify *another* kind of Christian in a Christian context, or the *other* in an Islamic context. The seventh century Byzantine historian Theophylact Simocatta recorded the fate of war prisoners from Scythia who were presented to the emperor in Constantinople as war booty. Although imprisoned whilst fighting in the army of the Muslim Turks, they were considered Christian because they had a cross on their foreheads. Upon enquiry they revealed that the cross was tattooed on their foreheads (ἐγκεντῆσαι τὰ μέτωπα) as children, to be

⁶⁵ G.W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit. A Study in the Doctrine of Baptism and Confirmation in the New Testament and the Fathers* (London: S.P.C.K., 1967), 3.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 261-263; Franz Joseph Dölger, *Sphragis. Eine altchristliche Taufbezeichnung in ihren Beziehungen zur profanen und religiösen Kultur des Altertums*, in *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums*, eds., E. Drerup, H. Grimme and J.P. Kirsch (Paderborn: Druck und Verlag von Ferdinand Schöningh, 1911), 98-104, 111-118, 175-181.

⁶⁷ Richard Smith “Ritual Power in Coptic Gnostic Texts”, in *Ancient Christian Magic. Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*, eds., Marvin W. Meyer and Richard Smith, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 63-66.

⁶⁸ Renaut, *Marquage corporel*, vol. 1, 785.

spared during an epidemic. Dölger advanced two explanations for these tattoos. The prisoners who lived among Turks (Eastern Scythians or Huns) were very likely Nestorians, one of the Eastern Christian denominations among which, as discussed below, religious tattooing was customary. An alternative explanation is that, in this case, the tattooed crosses were meant as amulets, and the bearers might not have been Christians at all⁶⁹. Whichever the case, these marks meant much to the Byzantines, who immediately associated the crosses on their foreheads with Christianity, particularly with the sort of Christianity unlicensed by Church and emperor.

The same identity function is illustrated by another war story. During an Abyssinian expedition to South Arabia in the first half of the sixth century, the local Christians, the Himyarites, not knowing the language of the invaders, signaled that they were Christians by pointing to the crosses tattooed on their hands. Acknowledging them as fellow Christians, the Abyssinians spared their lives⁷⁰. Tattooing or branding a cross as a mark of identity could be voluntary or enforced. A story from Jerusalem illustrates the latter case. It was told in the *Chronicon* of the Byzantine historian Teophanes. In an entry for the year 764, Teophanes recorded Abd al-Rhman' stay in Jerusalem, where he arrived after raiding the domains of the Roman emperor. Once in Jerusalem, Abd al-Rhman continued to defy his Christian enemy by preventing the Christian and Jewish residents of the city to flee to Byzantine-controlled lands. He identified them, hence making it impossible for them to leave the city, when "he desposed that Christians and Jews be inscribed on their hands" (ἐπέτρεψε γραφῆναι τοῦς Χριστιανοῦς καὶ τοῦς Ἑβραίους εἰς τὰς χεῖρας)⁷¹.

The friars dwelling among Easter Christians in Jerusalem were aware of both these functions of religious body marks. Much of their instruction on the subject was scholastic. They interpreted them as a sign of heresy and as a Christian badge. The association of these marks with deviancy was in the tradition of the orthodox canon, as discussed above. The friars were also influenced by illustrious predecessors in the East, such as Jacques de Vitry, whom they used extensively in their accounts about the other Christians⁷². However, although they relied heavily on authorities, it is clear that the Franciscans completed their recounting

⁶⁹ Dölger, "Die Kreuz-Tätowierung", 206-207.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 205-206.

⁷¹ I. Bekkere, ed. and Latin trans., *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Comeniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (Bonn: Ed. Weberm, 1838), 690.

⁷² The historico-geographical compilations produced by the friars of Mount Sion relied heavily on Latin authorities, which were employed to fashion the reader's understanding in terms of the "official" Western discourse towards the East. Campopiano, "Islam, Jews and Eastern Christianity", 79.

with personal observations, carefully recording that they have seen the signs they were describing.

The German friar Guglingen mentioned this practice on two occasions, both dealing with his listing the “errors” of the other Christians whom he crossed in Jerusalem, namely the Jacobites and the Abyssinians. First, he mentioned the branding in the section dealing with *De Iacobinis et eorum erroribus habitantibus Iherusalem*⁷³. Under their “third error” he described the branding of children as follows:

[Their] third error is that many of them, before their children are baptized, they have their forehands impressed with a branding-iron, cauterizing them. Indeed, others stamp with the sign of the cross their infants on both cheeks or on the forehead⁷⁴, perversely believing that they can be purged through the material fire, as it is written in the Gospel of Blessed Matthew, that Blessed John the Baptist said about Christ: ‘He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire’, which all the faithful read as the spiritual fire, namely that through the Holy Spirit the forgiveness of sins is realized, and not through real fire. Whence the Lord has made known this to the sons of Israel in a terrible manner, because of those who passed their sons through fire in the way of the Gentiles. The Lord speaks about all this in the Deuteronomy, through the prophet Moses: ‘Thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire’. And it is agreed by all Christians that Our Lord or his apostles and other holy fathers made sure that no such abuses were allowed into the Church. Thus, these Jacobites wear crosses branded on their forearms with an iron reed, in order to distinguish themselves from the heathens and in reverence to the Holy Cross⁷⁵.

Two distinct phenomena are mentioned here. First, the ritual branding of children associated with baptismal rites; and second, the branding of forearms as a means of establishing Christian identity for those living in the lands of Islam. Guglingen’s description

⁷³ MS 04/Hs.INR 10 Staatliche Bibliothek Neuburg an der Donau, 355-356.

⁷⁴ He actually says the temporal area of the forehead.

⁷⁵ “Tertius error est quod plures eorum ante baptismum parvulos suos cum ferreo calamo adurentes et signantes in frontibus imprimunt cauterium. Alii autem in modum crucis in ambabus genis seu tymporibus et in modo cruce infantes suos signant perverse putantes eos per ignem materiale expiari eo quod in Evangelium Beati Mathei scriptum sit, quod Beatus Iohannes Baptista de Christo dixerit: ‘Ipse vos baptizabit in Spiritu Sancto et igni’ [Matt. 3,11]. Cum tamen omnibus fidelibus ligant quod in igne spirituali, id est in Spiritu Sancto fiat remissio peccatorum et non in igne visibili. Unde Dominus in prophete arguit filios Israel eisdem terribiliter, eo quod more gentilium traiecebant filios suos per ignem. Ait omnem Dominus in Deuteronomum, per Moysem prophetam: ‘Cave ne imitari velis abominationes illarum gentium, nec inveniatur in te qui lustret filium suum aut filiam inducens per ignem’ [Deut. 18, 9-10]. Et constat omnibus Christianis quod Dominus noster vel eius apostoli seu ali qui patres sancti huiusmodi consuetudinem in ecclesia non reliquerunt neque tales abusiones fieri mandaverunt. Ipsi Iacobini consequenter portant cruces in brachiis cum ferreo calamo impressas ad distinctionem paganorum et ad reverentiam Sancte Crucis”. MS 04/Hs.INR 10 Staatliche Bibliothek Neuburg an der Donau, 356.

can be found almost word for word in Boverii's treating of the Jacobites, as part of his description of the *Iacobitorum* secta, as number three on his list enumerating their errors⁷⁶.

The similarity of the two references is conspicuous and it is explained through a common source. The description was taken almost verbatim from Jacques de Vitry's *Historia Orientalis* that listed the branding as the third error in his discussion of the Jacobites⁷⁷. Thus, the friars' recounting was in the tradition of the "orthodox" and Latin position on religious body marking, channeled through Jacques de Vitry. As in Late Antiquity, these marks continued to signal deviancy for the "orthodox beholder".

Often the reception of such descriptions as the ones left by the friars tend to be labeled as part in the arsenal of *mirabilia* and *exotica* of authors describing their journey to the East. However, this minimization is recanted both by the recurrent mention of this practices in pilgrims' writings and by the actual observation of traces left by religious tattoos on the foreheads of Eastern Christians today⁷⁸. Thus, authors like Guglingen and Boverii, who borrowed heavily from Jacques de Vitry, as many did in the Middle Ages when writing about the Levant, mingled personal observation and the authority of the bishop of Acre in their recollection of body marks.

This impression is justified by how Boverii chose to end his entry about the "third error of the Jacobite sect", with a personal observation: "I noticed and saw (*aspexi et vidi*) these [the Jacobites] branding themselves with the sign of the cross, as a distinctive mark from the heathens and in reverence to the Holy Cross". The similar passage in Jacques de Vitry ended with: "Truly, we saw crosses impressed with a hot iron on the arms of those [Christians] living among Saracens, both Jacobites and Syrians"⁷⁹. Clearly, Amedeus referred to his personal memory: *aspexi et vidi*.

⁷⁶ "Tertius quod plures eorum ante baptismum parvulos suos enim ferro calido admentes et signates in frontibus imprimatur cauterium, alii autem in modum cruces infantes suos signant perverse putantes eos per ignem materialem expiari eo, quod in Evangelio Mathei scriptum sit quod beatus Iohannes baptista de Christo dixit: "Ipse vos batisabit in Spiritu Sancto et igni" [Matt. 3,11]. Cum tamen omnibus fidelibus ligant quod in igne spirituali Spiritu Sancto sunt peccatores remissio et non igne visibili. Quorum tamen qui inter Sarracenos commorantur tam Iacobitorum quod Sarracenorum in brachiis cruces cum ferro calido impressas. Aspexi et vidi ipsi autem ad paganorum distinctionem et ab sancta crucis reverentiam caracterum crucis sibi imprimi faciunt". BNF Lat. 4826, 26r-26v.

⁷⁷ *Historia orientalis*, 306.

⁷⁸ See, for instance, the picture of the tattooed cross adorning the forehead of an Eritrean nun, sister Azezet, who was the subject of an article published by the magazine *Terre Sainte*. Émilie Rey, "Visages du Christ en terre bédouine", *Terre Sainte* 2 (2014): 76.

⁷⁹ "Horum vero inter Saracenos commorantur, tam Iacobitorum quam Surianorum, in brachiis cruces ex ferro calido impressas aspeximus". *Historia Orientalis*, 306.

The mention of baptismal branding occurs for a second time in Guglingen's chapter on *De Abassinis et erroribus eorum habitantibus Ierusalem*. He started the discussion of their errors by defining the ethnonym *Abassisnis*: "Abyssinians, also called Indians, from the province of India, from the land of the mighty king and illustrious prince called Prester John"⁸⁰. What Europeans called "Abyssinia", "India", and "Ethiopia" or "Nubia" corresponded to a region situated roughly in the south of Egypt⁸¹. This time, the description appears to rely more on personal observation, although the mentioning of branding in relation to the "Abyssinians" was part of the standard set of features ascribed to this community by Western travelers⁸².

However, when he mentioned the "baptism by fire" (*baptismus per ignem*) Guglingen left the well-trodden path of his predecessors in writing about the Christians of the Levant and introduced the argument of his own testimony, stating that he has asked Abyssinians he met in Jerusalem why they were practicing these erroneous rites. The discussion of the branding is related to circumcision, another rite that Abyssinians were wrongly performing and that made them guilty of *iudaisare*⁸³. First a description of the branding is given, very similar to the one provided in the case of the Jacobites, with the addition that some of them branded the sign of the cross on their noses as well (*alii super nasum*). The same passage of Deuteronomy (18, 9-10) is quoted to underscore the lack of biblical justification for this particular rite. Nevertheless, at this point, Guglingen mentioned that: "I diligently asked them why they observe such errors? (*Ego vero diligenter feci eos interrogare quare tales errores tenerent?*)", lending the authenticity of direct observation to his description of the

⁸⁰ "In sancta civitate nostre salute Iherusalem habitant viri non pauci qui Abassini, alii vero nomine Yndiani vocantur, ab Yndia provincia et dominio potentissimi rege ac illustrisimis principis quem Iohannem presbiterum appellant". MS 04/Hs.INR 10 Staatliche Bibliothek Neuburg an der Donau, 360.

⁸¹ Rouxpetel, "Indiens, Ethiopiens et Nubiens", 71-72.

⁸² Magister Thietmar is the first one to mention the branding in the baptism with fire of Eastern Christians, followed by numerous travelers who used his account as a source for their own diaries. *Ibid.*, 82.

⁸³ "Alia error non minor illo quia baptisant pueros per ignem hoc modo: Accipiunt tamen ferreum calamum ignatum adurentes et signantes parvulos in frontibus imprimunt cauterium. Alii in modum crucis in ambabus genis, alii super nasum, aliqui vos in omnibus locis littera crucibus averse putantes eos per ignem materialem expiari a culpa originali cum tamen orbisque vere Christifidelibus liqueat quod in igne spirituali, id est in Spiritu Sancto fiat remissio peccatorum et non in igne visibili. Unde Dominus huiusmodi prohibuit Deuteronomo dicentis: 'Cave ne imitari velis abominations illarum gentium, nec inveniatur in te qui lustret filium vel filiam suam inducens per ignem' [Deut. 18, 9-10]. Ego vero diligenter feci eos interrogare quare tales errores tenerent? Dixerunt quam circumcisionem reciperent tamque sacramentum necessitatis sed ex gratia et ad honorem Christi, ex quo ipse suscepit circumcisionem, vero recipient propter verum scriptum in Evangelium Mathei quod Beatus Iohannes Baptista dixit de Cristo inquentis: 'Ego baptizo vos aqua, ipse autem baptizabit vos in Spiritu Sancto et igni' [Matt. 3,11]. Quod de cetero non vellent tenere circumcisionem nec adustionem ignis, sed baptizari in aqua secundum constitutionem Romane Ecclesie. MS 04/Hs.INR 10 Staatliche Bibliothek Neuburg an der Donau, 361.

Abyssinians. He registered their answer, which the friar chose to put in the language of Aquinas with circumcision presented as “the sacrament of necessity”⁸⁴. Although translated by Guglingen in scholastic terms the alleged reply given by the Abyssinian Christians makes clear that they saw circumcision as a rite of passage, perfectly concordant with Christianity, since Christ himself underwent this rite. Likewise, they justified the *baptisums cum igne* through Matthew 3, 11, the evangelical passage customarily used in such circumstances.

Still, the passage dedicated to circumcision-baptism ended in an optimistic note, with the Abyssinians “not intending to observe further either circumcision or branding, but to baptize with water, in accordance with the custom of the Roman Church” (*Quod de cetero non vellent tenere circumcisionem nec adustionem ignis, sed baptizari in aqua secundum constitutionem Romane Ecclesie*). The cause for this optimism was the recently-acquired communion of “Abyssinians” and Roman Church (1483), a piece of information with which the friar opened the section dedicated to them.

Boverii made a short entrance about Abyssinians, whom he called with one of the usual ethnonyms employed to designate them, namely the *Yssini*. Thus, in the list mentioning the minor communities present in Jerusalem, he wrote that “The second (nation) is that of the *Yssini*⁸⁵, who live in Egypt and follow the teaching of Nestorius, although they wear a cross branded with a burning iron on their foreheads. Moreover, they say this [the fire in Matt. 3,11] is of material nature”⁸⁶.

There is historical evidence for the practice of tattooing within Abyssinian (Ethiopian) Christianity in the fifteenth century, when, in the reign of Zara-Jacob (1434-1468), people were forced to have tattooed on the forehead the names of the Trinity. Furthermore, on the right arm they had to have inscribed: “I renounce the devil and I am a servant of Mary, the Mother of the Creator”, on the left arm “I renounce the impure devil and adore Christ, my God”⁸⁷. In this particular case the tattoo was used as a means of expiation, the king imposing it on those who were accused of idolatry. Tattooing these very long inscriptions was however exceptional and due to extraordinary circumstances. Usually, in Ethiopia as well as in Coptic

⁸⁴ Aquinas defines baptism as “the sacrament of necessity”. Thomas Gilby, ed., *St. Thomas Aquinas. Summa Theologiae*. vol. 59 (3a. 79-83) *Holy Communion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 80.

⁸⁵ *Yssini* corresponds to the Arabic *habaš* meaning “Abyssinian”. Thus, the occurrence of the ethnonym “Yssini” in Western sources suggests the fact that it was probably a transcription of what Western pilgrims heard the local people calling themselves. Rouxpetel, “Indiens, Ethiopiens et Nubiens”, 73.

⁸⁶ “Secunda est Ysinorum, qui sunt in Egipto sequentes Nestorianos, sed portant crucem ferro ignante in fronte impressam. Hii etiam dicunt corpoream esse”. BNF Latin 4826, 29v.

⁸⁷ Archdale King, *The Rites of Eastern Christendom*, vol.1 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007), 509.

Egypt, people limited their tattoos to a small cross on the arm or the forehead⁸⁸. A passage in Suriano's *Trattato di Terra Santa* might echo these events. He was told by some of his brethren sent as missionaries to the land of "Prester John" in 1480, how the king's warriors were "cauterized by fire on the arm with the royal sign" (*catherizati su lo brazo del signo regale cum foco*)⁸⁹.

The second type of branding discussed by the friars refers to the branding of the sign of the cross as an identity mark for Christians. Using the cross as a body mark *ad paganorum distinctionem* features in the practice of Eastern Christians since Late Antiquity, when authors such as Procopius of Gaza (fifth century) talked about local Christians tattooing their wrists or their arms with a cross or the name of Christ⁹⁰. This practice is still alive today and is perceived by those who adopt it as a distinctive sign to singularize Christian identity. It is the case of the Copts of Egypt⁹¹, where the acquisition of the tattoo, usually a cross on the inside of the right wrist, is not associated to a religious ceremony or rite (such as baptism), but is done by independent tattooists in parlors installed in Coptic areas⁹².

In the Christian East, the permanent marking of the body occurred in ritual initiations or to impress a token of identity. These functions are a permanent feature of writings about Eastern Christianity, from Late Antiquity to the Franciscans of the Late Middle Ages. In the friars' descriptions of Christian interactions in Jerusalem, body marking was also a means to argue against what they saw as the deviant practices of the "others".

4. Iudaisare

One of the most efficient ways to accuse your adversaries of heterodox beliefs and practices, from the beginnings of Christianity, was to denounce them as "judaizers"⁹³. David Nirenberg has argued that only the age of the apostles saw the persistence of actual Jewish practices among the new converts. Beyond this early period, "judaizing" became a rhetorical

⁸⁸ Renaut, *Marquage corporel*, vol. 1, 808-809.

⁸⁹ Prester John was at this time the name given to the Christian rulers of Ethiopia. Cardini, *In Terrasanta*, 123. *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, 87.

⁹⁰ Renaut, *Marquage corporel*, vol. 1, 803.

⁹¹ It is mentioned under the heading "Marks of identification" by the authors of a recent history of the Coptic Church: "Now many Copts still point with pride to the crosses tattooed on the insights of their right wrists." Otto F.A. Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity* (Cairo-New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2002), 265; Christian Fraser, "Egypt's Coptic Christians Battle for ID Cards". http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8424599.stm [last accessed: September 2016]

⁹² Renaut, *Marquage corporel*, vol. 1, 788.

⁹³ David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism. The Western Tradition* (New York-London: W.W. Norton&Company, 2013), 93-134.

tool, used to point out heterodoxy, functioning like an umbrella that covered ritual practices (such as circumcision) and exegetical traditions (such as literal exegesis)⁹⁴. Judaizing presented the Christian rhetoric with an efficient means to incriminate deviant beliefs, especially during the Christological debates that marked the first five Christian centuries. In this period, when theologians rebuked Christians for judaizing practices, they referred to Christians partaking in Jewish rites and to the observance of Christian rituals in a manner resembling Jewish ceremonies⁹⁵.

Following the Council of Chalcedon and the split between the Roman and Byzantine Chalcedonian Churches, on one side, and the Miaphysite Churches of the Near East, on the other side, and in the aftermath of the schism between the Roman and Byzantine Churches, the accusation of judaizing (*iudaisare*) featured high in the rhetoric of ascribing heterodox beliefs and observances to the “other”. Beyond rhetoric, practices condemned as judaizing did resemble Jewish rituals. It was the case with the usage of the unleavened bread in the Eucharist of the Roman and Armenian Churches, the practice of circumcision in the Ethiopian Church, or, indeed, of Latins fasting on Saturdays. In what follows, I discuss two ritual practices condemned by friars as judaizing: the Greek observance of Saturday as a feast day and circumcision in the Abyssinian Church.

Vilifying the Greek observance of “feasting on the Sabbath” was the Latin way of reversing one of the most common objection formulated by Greeks against the judaizing observances of the Roman Church, *i.e.* the Western custom of fasting on the Sabbath. Following their common source, Jacques de Vitry⁹⁶, Amedeus Boverii and Paul Walter both discussed the Greek “lavish feasting” (*splendide epulantur*) on the Sabbath. In the words of Guglingen:

Their sixth error [the Greeks’] is that they very much consider that it is not allowed to any of them to fast on Saturdays, with the exception of Holy Saturday. And they celebrate the divine [office] on the Sabbath as solemnly as they do on Sundays, when they eat meats in the manner of the Jews and they

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁹⁵ Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, 19-20.

⁹⁶ “Diem autem sabbathi adeo sollemnem reputans, quod non licet alicui eorum in sabbatho ieiunare, excepto tantummodo sabbatho sancto pasche. Solemniter autem sicut in die dominica, in sabbatho divina celebrant et carnes in ea manducantes, more Iudeorum splendide epulantur. Hec autem sollemnis observatio a Latinis reprobata est ne iudaizare videantur”. *Historia Orientalis*, 75, 304.

feast lavishly. Truly, this sort of rite and observance are refuted by Latins, so that they are not seen judaizing⁹⁷.

As shown above, the standard way to reason with difference within Christianity was to make a list of the others' "errors". If the feasting of the Sabbath featured as the sixth (and judaizing) error on the Latin list of the German friar, its counterpart, the Western custom of fasting on the Sabbath, featured in the Greek lists of errors, appearing (predictably) under the judaizing practices of the Latins. If in the early tradition of the Church, Wednesday and Friday were days of fasting, in the fifth century the Roman and Alexandrian churches stopped fasting on Wednesday, extending the Friday fast to Saturday instead. At the same time, in the East, celebrating the Eucharist on Saturday became mandatory as a visible means of replacing the observance of the Sabbath. Fasting observances were a sensitive point in the Latin-Greek dynamics, with Greeks mocking Latin fasting practices as too lenient (it is a recurrent item on the list of "the errors of the Latins")⁹⁸. On their side, the Latins were bearing the brunt reluctantly, seeing the stricter fasting customs of the Greeks as a manifestation of their hubris. Thus, Suriano wrote that: "These perfidious heretics boast that they are better than us, and holier, because both clergy and laymen fast five times a year, when they [actually] do not fast, but they just do not eat fat [dishes cooked in fat] and dairy"⁹⁹.

The ritual clearly taken over from the Jewish religion and thus most cited as proof of judaizing was the circumcision practiced by some of the non-Chalcedonian churches: Nestorians, Jacobites and Abyssinians. The friars noted that circumcision did not exclude the receiving of baptism within these churches, with the child being usually first circumcised and then baptized¹⁰⁰. Circumcision was condemned as a heretical observance and Latin authors tended to present the Jacobites as the source of this error, with the other non-Chalcedonians (Abyssinians and Nestorians) somehow "contaminated" by it. However, the Latin understanding of circumcision as mainly a Jacobite error pointed more to their tendency to

⁹⁷ "Sextus error est quod die Sabbati adeo solemnem reputantur, quod non licet alicui eorum in sabbato ieiunare, dempta Sabatho Sancte Pasce. Et divina in sabato solemniter sicut in die dominica celebrantur, et in eo more Iudeorum carnes manducantur et splendide epulantur. Talis autem ritus et observatio a Latinis reprobata est ne iudaizare videantur". MS 04/Hs.INR 10 Staatliche Bibliothek Neuburg an der Donau, 349.

⁹⁸ Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists*, 34-43.

⁹⁹ "Questi perfidi heretici se gloriano esser migliori de nui, et più spirituali, per que fano cinque quareseme l'anno, si religiosi come seculari, in le quali non deunano, ma solum non magiano de grasso, nè lacticinia". *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, 74.

¹⁰⁰ Boverii about Nestorians: "Quartus [error] quod circumcissionem more Iudeorum recipient et post ea baptizantur". BNF Latin 4826, 27v; Francesco Suriano referring both to Abissinians and Jacobites: "Questi se cicumcidono e poi se batizano in aqua". *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, 77, 78; Guglingen: "Isti tenuerunt usque ad parvulos istos cum Iudeis et Iacobinis circumcissionem corporalem". MS 04/Hs.INR 10 Staatliche Bibliothek Neuburg an der Donau, 361.

ascribe to whom they perceived as the non-Chalcedonian archvillain, namely the Jacobite church, the practice of rituals they deemed deviant.

In fact, the Ethiopian Church was the only non-Chalcedonian church that practiced circumcision. Plus, within this tradition, circumcision was not introduced via the Jacobite connection, but was part of the direct Jewish inheritance claimed by the Ethiopian church. The tradition of the Ethiopian church affirms the receiving of the Gospel directly from the “Church of the Circumcision”, not from Greece or Egypt. Moreover, its Old Testament character was justified through the tradition ascribing the foundation of the Ethiopian imperial dynasty to Menelik, the son the Queen of Sheba had by Solomon¹⁰¹. Circumcision was not the only “Jewish rite” incorporated in the practice of the Ethiopian Church, in which Saturday was observed as well as Sunday, dietary rules similar to the Jewish law applied, and the Ark of the Covenant (*sic*) featured in the monthly feast of “our holy Fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”¹⁰².

Thus, the “judaising” rituals of the Abyssinians had more to do with traditions about the Queen of Sheba than with their abidance by a non-Chalcedonian creed.

Judaising featured as a handy tool in the rhetorical arsenal of intra-Christian debates from the beginning of the religion. In late medieval Jerusalem it served the same purpose, namely labeling alternative rituals as heretical. What surprises is the formulaic nature of these imputations. Although they did live and officiate rituals side by side or even together, the friars mostly limited the narrative of their encounter to the accustomed us-and-them framework.

5. Ritual sounds and ritual objects

Since the Early Middle Ages, in Latin Christianity, ringing the bells represented one of the distinctive means by which a Christian community could assert its presence and status. They became an identity marker. The Crusaders introduced the liturgical use of bells in Jerusalem and throughout the Holy Land. In his history of the First Crusade, Albert of Aachen wrote that, after he became ruler of Jerusalem, Godfrey of Bouillon ordered the

¹⁰¹ Kirsten Pedersen, *Ethiopian Institutions in Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1975), 7-8.

¹⁰² King, *The Rites*, vol. 1, 544-545.

fitting with bells of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This was a novelty to Jerusalem “for there were no sounds or signals of this sort seen or heard in Jerusalem before these days”¹⁰³.

In the East, local Christians used different sounding objects in their liturgical services, such as the wooden clapper (*nāqūs*) or the liturgical fan (in the Syriac church). The ritual sounding of liturgical objects such as the *nāqūs* was perceived from the beginning of the Muslim conquest of lands inhabited by a majority of Christians as a distinctive mark of Christian communities and, thus, subjected to the regulation of Islamic law. As with other aspects pertaining to organizing the life of the non-Muslim subjects, ritual sounds heard in the Christian liturgy or associated with the communal life of Christian communities made the object of provisions in the *Pact of ‘Umar*¹⁰⁴: “We shall only beat our clappers in our churches *very quietly* (italics mine)”; “We shall not raise our voices in our church services, nor in the presence of Muslims”; “We shall not go outside on Palm Sunday or Easter, nor shall we raise our voices in our funeral processions”¹⁰⁵.

The gist of these restrictions concerned the avoidance of becoming conspicuous also by means of sound, be it by the loud banging of clappers, liturgical chant or funeral wailing. The quiet beating of clappers was admitted, but what that meant precisely had to be established by a Muslim official¹⁰⁶. Breaching the limits of the accepted quietness could lead to the destruction of the church where the incident had occurred¹⁰⁷. Thus, speaking about the community in Oran, Suriano made the general point about Christians praying behind locked

¹⁰³ “It seemed a good idea to Duke Godfrey, the highest prince of Jerusalem, and likewise to all the rest, that twenty brothers in Christ should be appointed to observe the divine office in the Temple of the Lord’s Sepulchre, who at every hour would sing praises and hymns to the living Lord God, would piously offer up the sacrifice of Jesus Christ’s body and blood, then would undertake the daily upkeep arranged from the offering of the faithful. When divine observance had thus been honorably restored by the Catholic duke and Christian princes, they ordered bells to be made from bronze and other metals (*campanas ex ere et ceteris metallis fieri iusserunt*), and soon when the brothers heard the signal and sound of these they would hurry to the church to celebrate the praises of the psalms and the prayers of masses, and the faithful people would as one make haste to hear these things. For there were no sounds or signals of this sort seen or heard in Jerusalem before these days (*Non enim huiuscemodi soni aut signa uisa uel audita sunt ante hos dies in Ierusalem*)”. Susan B. Edgington, ed. and trans., *Albert of Aachen Historia Ierosolimitana. History of the Journey to Jerusalem* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 40, 454-455. This is a description of the first introduction of the Latin rite at the Church of Holy Sepulchre, an intrinsic part of whose office was linked to the ringing of bells. Albert of Aachen emphasized that there were no bells in Jerusalem at the time of the conquest, and that were cast for the first time at the order of the Christian princes. I thank Julian Yolles for signaling Albert of Aachen’s text to me.

¹⁰⁴ The Pact of ‘Umar didn’t address only the Christian communities but all the *dhimmīs*, all the non-Muslims leaving in the land of Islam.

¹⁰⁵ Cohen, “What Was the Pact of ‘Umar”, 107.

¹⁰⁶ In the case of Mamluk Egypt, for instance, this was the responsibility of the *muhtasib* “an inspector of public spaces, this legal official traversed the city carrying out his duty to command right and forbid wrong.” Kristen Stilt, *Islamic Law in Action. Authority, Discretion, and Everyday Experiences in Mamluk Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 114.

¹⁰⁷ Such an example is the destruction of the church in Giza, in Egypt, in 1378 following the complaint that Christians beat the clappers during Muslim’s Friday prayers. *Ibid.*, 111.

doors “in all the lands of the infidels”¹⁰⁸. Because it could interfere with the life of Muslims, the sound produced by *dhimmī* communities had to be restricted.

A similar restriction was applied to Muslims in Christian lands, for instance in the western Mediterranean after the Christian reconquest. The Muslim call to prayer (*adhān*) was forbidden by the Council of Vienne (1311), although the implementation of this prohibition was a matter of negotiation in the lands concerned. Thus, both in the West and the East “religious noise” in the form of “rituals of noise” functioned as an identity marker subjected to regulation: “The Muslim call to prayer (*adhān*) and the Christian ringing of church bells are both signals and symbols, and since the early medieval period, these rituals of noise have served as potent elements in discourses on religious power and territorial control”¹⁰⁹.

The soundscape of the Holy Land changed after the Islamic reconquest¹¹⁰. Latin Christians coming to the Holy Land noticed the minarets and the call to prayer. For instance, the Italian Franciscan Giovanni di Fedanzola da Perugia crossed the Holy Land from north to south (“from Dan to Beersheba”) in the first decades of the fourteenth century¹¹¹. During the travel, he noticed the minarets, which he described as “belfries” (*campanili*). In Ramla and Jerusalem, the friar noted the call to prayer during day and night (*de nocte et die*). He understood correctly the function of the *adhān* as proclamation of faith, described in the usual way, as the “their execrable law” and “the law of the most execrable Muhammad”¹¹². The *Pact of 'Umar* only mentioned the use of the wooden clapper, the sounding object most common among Christians at the time of the conquest. However, at the end of the crusader rule in the Holy Land, the use of bells, the sounding objects mostly used by Latins, fell under the same regulation as the wooden clapper. Their sounding was forbidden by law in Islam, as the “loud” sounding of the *nāqūs* had to be curtailed¹¹³. Nevertheless, the ringing of bells in

¹⁰⁸ “Li quali [Christians of Oran] stavano serati in casa sino finite la predicatione, como se costuma in tute le parte de li infideli”. *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, 217.

¹⁰⁹ Olivia Remie Constable, “Regulating Religious Noise: The Council of Vienne, the Mosque Call and Muslim Pilgrimage in the Late Medieval Mediterranean World”, *Medieval Encounters* 16 (2010): 65-81

¹¹⁰ For a discussion of soundscape as a means of defining civic identity, see: Niall Atkinson, “The Republic of Sound: Listening to Florence at the Threshold of the Renaissance”, *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 16 (2013): 57-84.

¹¹¹ Ugolino Nicolini and Renzo Nelli, eds., *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae Ms. Casanatense 3876* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 2003), XII-XX.

¹¹² In Ramla, Giovanni di Fedanzola stressed that he has heard it “with my own ears”: “Et in campanili loci dicti, facti ad modum turris, Saraceni acclamant de nocte et die suam nephandam legem, sicut ego ibidem auribus meis audivi”. In Jerusalem, he wrote about the Haram al-Sharif, where the “Saracen priests” climbed a high tower from which they “proclaimed the law of the most execrable Muhammad”: “est una turris alta quam sacerdotes Saracenorum consueverunt ascendere et legem Machumeti nephandissimi proclamare”. *Ibid.*, 62, 80.

¹¹³ ‘Umar II forbade the *nāqūs* and loud chanting in Christian worship. This also happened when the noise produced by worshipping Christians could overlap with the *adhān*, and when churches were in the near vicinity of

the churches of the Holy Land was very much a matter of negotiation¹¹⁴. A few examples connected to the mission of the Franciscans in the Holy Land point out that, at least in the Latin churches of Mamluk Jerusalem, the ringing of bells featured, although sporadically, in their liturgical life.

In Latin Christianity bells marked the canonical hours and summoned the faithful, their usage being standardized in Carolingian times¹¹⁵. In Mamluk Jerusalem the regimen of sound, as everything else, was subjected to Islamic law, including the restrictions of the *Pact of 'Umar*. In an Islamic city they could be circumvented either through the direct intervention of the sultan¹¹⁶ or by challenging the limits of *quietness* in the daily celebration of the office.

The latter appears to be in case with the friars and their churches. To Latin churches in Jerusalem, the ringing of bells was foremost a feature of the canonicity of their liturgical services. This is how their use is registered in sources coming from this period. Breaching the limits of quietness also meant an assertion of Christian identity, by sounding its “otherness”

MS. 5 of the Biblioteca Generale della Custodia di Terra Santa in Jerusalem contains the chants for the daily procession made by the friars of St Savior after the compline¹¹⁷. In

mosques, and the ritual noises of the two communities would compete. A.S. Tritton, *The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslims Subjects. A Critical Study of the Covenant of 'Umar* (London-Bombay-Calcutta-Madras: Oxford University Press, 1930), 104-105.

¹¹⁴ This was the case with other restrictions inherent to rules regarding *dhimmīs* under the *Pact of 'Umar*, for instance the repair of religious buildings, that could be done only by permission. For instance, the problem of the leaking roof could be solved by seeking a direct privilege from the sultan, as it happened in 1411, when the friars obtained a *firman* issued by sultan Nasir-ad-Din Faraj, by which the governor of Jerusalem was ordered to allow reparations at the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. It was specified that the friars could bring building materials (wood, lead) through the port of Jaffa and make the needed repairs without being molested. Risciani, *Documenti e firmani*, 70- 73.

¹¹⁵ On the origins of the liturgical usage of bells, see John H. Arnold and Caroline Goodson, “Resounding Community: The History and Memory of Medieval Church Bells”, *Viator* 43:1 (2012): 99-112.

¹¹⁶ Suriano believed such a privilege was granted to some Christians living in Tunis, in recompense for their services to the lord of the country. The provisions of this privilege trespassed several provisions of the *Pact of 'Umar*, regarding the usage of bells, the layout of *dhimmī* cemeteries and processions. The Venetian friar granted bells with the capacity to make the most striking statement, because they sounded “against the Mahomedan law”: “Alli quali [the Christians of Tunis] per valore, fedeltà e valentia, li sono concesse chiese, campanilli cum campane, cimiterii, far cum la croce publice processione: sonano campane contro la lege Machometana”. *Il trattato di Terra Santa*, 204-205. Another example is that of the Maronite monastery of Qannūbīn, where tolling the bells to summon the faithful was also the result of a privilege granted by the sultan. Halīm Noujaim, *I Francescani e i maroniti (1233-1516)* (Milan: Edizioni Terra Santa, 2012), 28.

¹¹⁷ The new online catalogue of the Biblioteca Generale della Custodia di Terra Santa Jerusalem dates MS.5, on the basis of paleography, “probably to the fifteenth century”. <http://www.bibliothecaterraesanctae.org/images/inventario-manoscritti/Fondo.MS/MS.5.pdf> [last accessed: July 2016]. However, the manuscript describes a procession held in the church Of St Savior, or the Franciscans acquired this church in Jerusalem only in 1516. Thus, I presume, if dated to the fifteenth century, this manuscript then belonged to the monastery of St Savior in Beirut, where the friars did have a presence in the fifteenth century. The transfer of this book from Beirut is a possibility as many books held today by the Biblioteca Generale della Custodia di Terra Santa were brought to Jerusalem from the Franciscan convent in

this manuscript the use of musical instruments is mentioned in several places. Thus, the friars of St Savior used the organ during this procession on the following days: “On the occasion of first and second class solemnities or on the washing of pilgrims’ feet¹¹⁸ or when, for some other occasion, the organs are played at the compline, once the *Angelus Domini* is said, the meditation [for that day] is postponed and immediately the *O Gloriosa* is chanted”¹¹⁹. The ringing of bells associated with the procession following the compline happened:

In summer, from the Easter of the Resurrection until the feast of the Holy Father Francis¹²⁰, when the discipline is more loose, a period of bodily refreshment is taken, and, at the usual hour, through the sound of all the bells everyone is summoned to church, and the cantors sing *O gloriosa*, recite *De profundis*, and, at the end, the discipline is made, in which the psalms *Miserere* and *De profundis* are recited one by one in a high voice, alternating with other [chants] until the antiphon *Christus* is chanted. Once the discipline is finished, indulgences¹²¹ are gained¹²².

Beirut. The other possibility I envisage is that MS.5 did belong to St Savior’s in Jerusalem and was used there in the first part of the sixteenth century. “Processio quotidiana in conventu S. Salvatoris Ierosolymis post completorium pater chorista et eius socius cantabunt per ordinem hymnos sequentes et cetera in hoc codice contenta”. MS.5 BGCTS, 1.

¹¹⁸ A description of this ritual in a seventeenth century source has the guardian and two acolytes washing the feet of pilgrims with water and aromatic herbs, accompanied by appropriate chants and prayers. The ceremony ended with the kissing of pilgrim’s feet by all friars and a procession that took them into the church. “La charitable coutume que nous avons en notre religion, de laver les pieds aux étrangers qui arrivent en nous couvents de toutes les provinces du monde, se pratique avec beaucoup plus de cérémonie à Jérusalem, un peu avant complies, tous les religieux de la communauté s’assemblent devant la porte de l’église [presumably St Saviour], où l’on a préparé un siège tapisse, sur lequel s’assoient les pèlerins les uns après les autres, pendant que le père gardien, avec deux acolytes, et un porte-croix revêtus d’aube et de surplis, leur lavant les pieds avec des eux et herbes aromatiques. Durant que ce fait cette cérémonie, les religieux chantent en musique *Laetatus sum in his, quae dicta sunt mihi, in domum Domini ibimus*, et autre psaumes et prières appropriées à ce ministère. Les pieds étant laves, le père gardien les leur baise, et tous les religieux les uns après les autres font le même. Puis le gardien leur mit un cierge à la main, après qu’on commence à chanter le *Te Deum laudamus*, en cheminant processionnellement autour du cloître, et de là à l’église où l’on va en cette même sorte, visitant tous les autels, et chantant les hymnes et suffrages appropriés à chaque autel”. Elias Kattar, ed., *Eugène Roger, La Terre Sainte ou Terre de promission* (Kaslik-Liban: Université Saint-Esprit, 1992), 458. It is very likely that, the earlier ritual hinted at in MS5 was very similar, given the fact that a similar liturgy was employed to welcome pilgrims by singing the psalm *Laetatus sum*, followed by the procession in which the friars led them into the church: “Lotio pedum peregrinorum fit post completorium ante processionem in qua cantatur psalmus seu vel unus cantus tantum iuxta numerum personarum. *Laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt*, psalmi sequenti *Laudate pueri; Lauda Ierusalem; Magnificat*. V. *Tu mandasti mandata tua*. R. *Custodiri nimis*. V. *Tu lavasti pedes discipulorum tuorum*. R. *Opera manuum tuarum ne despicias*. V. *Domine exaudi*. R. *Et clamor meus*. V. *Dominus vobiscum*. R. *Et cum spiritu tuo*. Post orationem fit processio per ambitum et cantatur *Te deum laudamus*”. MS.5 BGCTS, 12-13.

¹¹⁹ “In festis solemnioribus primae vel secundae classis et in lotionem pedum peregrinorum vel quando ad completorium alia de causa pulsantur organa dicto *Angelus Domini*, relinquitur meditatio et ilico cantatur *O gloriosa*”. *Ibid.*, 24-25.

¹²⁰ The date of the Easter was in the spring, the feast of St Francis of Assisi on the 4th of October.

¹²¹ Probably the procession happened in the presence of pilgrims, those most likely to gain an indulgence in the Holy Land.

¹²² “Quando in aestate fit disciplina lax est a Paschate Resurrectionis usque ad festam S.P. Francisci, post meditationem accipitur refectio corporalis et postea, hora solita, sono campanae omnes congregantur in ecclesia et cantores canunt *O Gloriosa*, dicunt *De profundis* et in fine fit disciplina in qua uterque dicunt alta voce

The instructions given in this manuscript seem to point towards a joint use of the organ and bells. An explanation might be found in some items coming from the Treasury of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem (dated twelfth-thirteenth century), displayed today in the Museum of the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum* in Jerusalem¹²³. Thirteen bells and 250 copper organ pipes are part of this treasury, the bells belonging to two distinctive carillons that were sounded together with the organ¹²⁴. That suggests a reasonable explanation for the usage of the organ (actually *organs* “organa”) on occasions when customarily the bells were rung, as it was the case with the prayer *Angelus Domini*. If such an installation was found at some point in the Church of the Nativity, chances are a similar one found its place in the Franciscan convent of St Savior. The bells we have today from the Church of the Nativity were part of the crusader carillon which most likely was silenced after the Frankish defeat in the Levant¹²⁵. Nevertheless, sources such as the M5 discussed here, that point to the joint usage of organ and bells in the office, appear to indicate that probably some sort of bells and organ might have been used in late medieval Jerusalem as well.

Other sources related to the Franciscan mission in the Holy Land suggest that their churches had to be fitted with bells, listed among the usual items needed for the good functioning of their community. For instance, the bull *Ad ea quae in laudem* issued by Innocent VI in 1361, granted the friars of the Holy Land the right to build a monastery in the Valley of Josaphat, at the Tomb of the Virgin. The new foundation would have “a church, chapel or oratory, (a) bell (*campana*) and bell towers (*campanili*), cemetery and lodgings and other necessary fittings”¹²⁶. However, Beatrice Saletti has shown that such stipulations rather expressed papal hopes, these building intentions never concretized during Mamluk times¹²⁷.

psalmos *Miserere* et *De profundis* alternatim cum ceteris usque ad antiphonam *Christus*. Finita disciplina lucrantur indulgentias”. MS.5 BGCTS, 25.

¹²³ They were exposed in the museum in October 2014, when I visited it.

¹²⁴ The clarification about the joint usage is made on the website of the museum: <http://sbf.custodia.org/default.asp?id=541> [last accessed: June 2015].

¹²⁵ 13 bells (12 of European origin and one Chinese) and 250 organ tubes were dug out during works for the building of a new Franciscan guesthouse in Bethlehem in 1903. They were buried together with other precious liturgical objects dated to Crusader times. It is probable that the Chinese bell was among the objects brought from Central Asia by the Franciscans William of Rubruck and Bartolomeo da Cremona on their way back from the mission to the Mongols in 1253. The carillon and the rest of the liturgical objects were probably buried when the law censoring *dhimmī* sounds was reinforced. Jacques Charles-Goffiot, “Cloches chinoise”, in *Trésor du Saint-Sépulcre. Ouvrage publié à l'occasion de l'exposition Trésor du Saint-Sépulcre. Présents des cours royales européennes à Jérusalem présentée au Château de Versailles et à la Maison de Chateaubriand (Châtenay-Malabry) du 16 avril au 14 juillet 2013* (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2013), 340.

¹²⁶ “huiusmodi locum cum Ecclesia, Cappella seu Oratorio, campana et campanili, caemeterio et domibus et aliis necessariis officinis”. Ciganotto, Ludovico, ed., *Bullarium Franciscanum Terræ Sanctæ* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1926), 49-51.

¹²⁷ Saletti, *I francescani in Terrasanta*, 107-108.

Although permits were granted for the repair of churches, there were no new buildings, let alone belfries.

The manuscript mentions that only the organs were played at the *Angelus*, which might indicate the replacement of bells (too noisy?) to mark the hour of an essential prayer in the Catholic liturgical life worldwide. This assumption is however contradicted by the next instruction discussed here, mentioning that bells were rung to summon the friars, who in summer enjoyed a resting period in the afternoon, to the procession. Although the church of the convent and the complex of St Savior at the time were definitely smaller than the present ones, the mention that they were summoned to church from somewhere else through the sound of bells, suggests that the sound was probably heard outside the monastic compound. Thus, it is reasonable to think that, at least in this particular circumstance, the bells of St Savior pushed the boundaries of what “quiet” meant in a Muslim city.

Felix Fabri also made clear that Christian chants could be heard in Jerusalem, beyond the confines of churches. In one of the processions held on Mount Sion, friars and pilgrims chanted so loudly, that “the sound poured out far off to the entire Mount Sion and to Jerusalem” (*quod sonus procul per omnem montem Syon et per Jerusalem diffundebatur*)¹²⁸. Rituals sounds, alongside processions and other outer (although limited) public manifestations of their faith, provided the friars with yet another means to negotiate their public presence in the Holy Land.

Affirming the primacy of a particular brand of Christianity was also a matter of sound. The sounding of instruments specific to a certain tradition established a sense of precedence. That is how Boverii in the chapter dedicated to the list of the “errors of the Greeks” assessed their usage of sounding objects. In the established tradition of the “list of errors”, the friar meticulously numbered the many errors the Greeks needed to be “purged of” (*deluantes errores*)¹²⁹. The tenth point of his list of the errors of the Greeks ends with a mention that “They use bells where they govern, but where they are under Latin rule, they sound boards with a metal rod”¹³⁰. This very obscure mention of boards being sounded might be an indication of the use of the *nāqūs*, known as the *semantron* in the Greek world, “a sort

¹²⁸ *Evagatorium*, vol. 1, 245.

¹²⁹ “Tertio est populata sancta civitas Iherusalem Grecorum gente que multas huic sectas et varia nomina Christiane religionis sibi usurpant prout deducetur infernis in subiectione a fide catholica multipliciter deluantes errores”. MS BNF Latin 23 r.

¹³⁰ “Campanas utuntur ubi dominantur sed ubi sunt sub Latinis tabulis cum fero artificialiter consonante”. *Ibid.*, 24 r.

of metal or wooden gong” used to summon the faithful especially in the lands of Islam where bells could not be sounded¹³¹.

Interestingly, the friar did not link the use of this particular instrument to Islamic censure (to which all Christians were subjected in the Holy Land) but to Latin preeminence. This might point to a state of affairs he witnessed (a particular context in which Latins were the dominant presence), perhaps in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre itself at the time of his visit.

Christian conspicuousness in fifteenth-century Jerusalem was censured by the Islamic law governing the city. One of the many restrictions applied to the sounds associated to their rituals, among other conspicuous identity markers. If we consider the immediate geography of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the minority status of the Christians could not have been more blatant. Whilst Christians had to pray behind locked doors and abide by the limits of established quietness in their observances, only a few feet away from the entrance of their church, the *adhān* would blast five times a day from the Mosque of ‘Umar across the parvis, invading their soundscape and superimposing on their own chants. Every exception of this rule was a matter of tactful negotiation and needed to take the shape of a privilege. However, even within the confines of such a restricted space as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, sound was used to assert hierarchies. As the fragment from Amadeus Boverii shows, the kind of instruments used and even their mere sounding could signify one of the communities as dominant. Thus, almost like everything else in the dynamics of coexistence in Jerusalem, the sound associated to Christian rituals was a matter of negotiation, both within and outside the community.

6. Conclusions

Recording the diversity of rituals practiced by the “other” Christians of the Holy Land provided the friars with the opportunity to assert their own identity, by comparing their own rites (and the theology behind them) with what they were witnessing in the others’ ceremonies. A close reading of the Franciscan sources indicates that the direct interaction of Latins and Eastern Christians was conducted according to a preset scenario. Rare are the instances when we can read about a circumstance in which the narrator actually interacted with his similar other.

¹³¹ King, *The Rites*, vol. 2, 118.

More often than not, the perception of the friars (at least what they deemed important enough to preserve in writing) appears to be shaped by the “list of errors”. Seldom the monotonous list was interrupted to give room to personal observation, a hint that the author did live in Jerusalem among these “heretics” for quite some time. And, indeed, we know they did. But these were men of ecclesiastical discipline and not ethnographers indulging in the close observation of the alien. Their background shaped their recollection of Jerusalemite encounters, which were bound to be contentious. Rituals functioned as visible markers of different theologies, a means to negotiate the superiority of one’s own creed in the eyes of the other.

In this chapter I traced the dynamics of orthodoxy within the Christian community of Jerusalem and its minority status from the perspective of the Franciscan friars. They understood their presence in the city as a permanent negotiation both with the rest of the Christian community and with the Muslim authorities. The cases explored above show how in their version of the Holy Land narrative, the friars used rituals as polemical means in the defence both of their presence and of the orthodoxy of the Roman creed. The contentious character of this dialogue influenced the rituals carried out by the brethren in Jerusalem. A few of them are analyzed in the following chapters.