

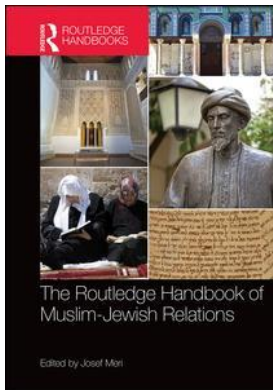
This article was downloaded by: 10.3.97.143

On: 29 Nov 2023

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



The Routledge Handbook of Muslim–Jewish Relations

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Historical themes

Publication details

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315675787.ch01>

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Published online on: 23 Jun 2016

How to cite :- Josef (Yousef) Meri. 23 Jun 2016, *Historical themes from: The Routledge Handbook of Muslim–Jewish Relations* Routledge

Accessed on: 29 Nov 2023

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315675787.ch01>

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Historical themes

Muslim–Jewish relations in the medieval Middle East and North Africa

Josef (Yousef) Meri

Today the history of Muslim–Jewish relations in the Middle Ages is often filtered through the lens of polemics in the media. A sound interpretation of history requires a sound understanding based upon careful consideration of the positive and negative events that shaped history and exploring aspects of history beyond two extremes – a discourse that aims either to glorify history or vilify religion or the actors and events. This chapter will highlight some of the most significant historical themes and personalities in the encounter between Muslims and Jews during the Middle Ages. Such encounters sometimes involved Christians and others. Relations between communities cannot be regarded as static, compartmentalized, and fixed but rather as flexible and changing throughout the Middle Ages.

Middle Ages generally refers to the period between the rise of Islam in the seventh century and the height of the Ottoman and Shi'i Safavid dynasties during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Scholars who have argued for a less Eurocentric demarcation have challenged the applicability of this paradigm to the Islamic world.¹ However, *Middle Ages* remains useful in explaining the diverse nature of interactions that occurred over a period before the decline of the Ottoman Empire from the eighteenth century and the ascendancy of Europe in the Middle East and North Africa. While major acts of violence occurred against Jews, Christians, and indeed Muslims, some of the greatest achievements of Muslims, Jews, and Christians occurred in Baghdad, Al-Andalus, and Cairo. Jewish, Christian, and Muslim theologians, philosophers, writers, scientists, physicians, and poets (see chapters 5, 6, and 9, this volume) contributed to the growth of Arabic-Islamic culture and different branches of learning. Descriptions of the grandeur of the court of the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Rahmān III (r. 912–929) in Córdoba offer a rare glimpse into one of the most extraordinary periods in medieval Islamic history.

Today it is all too easy to make sweeping generalizations about anti-Semitism existing in the medieval Islamic world without engaging with the ideas, historical events, and actors that contributed to anti-Jewish words and deeds. Anti-Semitism is a phenomenon born in Christian Europe but imported to the Middle East and disseminated from the nineteenth century (see chapters 2 and 18, this volume).² While rulers and marauding troops occasionally engaged in persecution of Jews and Christians, others embraced Jewish

communities who fled persecution and allowed them to reside within their realm. Each historical occurrence of violence or persecution that is later discussed shall be examined on its own merits.

Background: early Islam

Jews and Christians are referred to in the Qur'an as *ahl al-kitāb* or People of the Book or Scripture:

And dispute ye not with the People of the Book, except with means better (than mere disputation), unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury): but say, "We believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; Our Allah³ and your Allah is one; and it is to Him we bow (in Islam)."⁴
(Qur'an 29:46)

The Qur'an also refers to them as those who "...rehearse the Signs of God all night long, and they prostrate themselves in adoration" (Qur'an 3:113). Exegetes generally apply this verse to the righteous among the Jews and Christians. Also,

And there are, certainly, among the People of the Book, those who believe in God, in the revelation to you, and in the revelation to them, bowing in humility to God. They will not sell the Signs of God for a miserable gain! For them is a reward with their Lord, and God is swift in account.
(Qur'an 3:199)

In the Qur'anic context, *Ahl al-Kitāb* refers to Jews and Christians who are pious and humble themselves before God. These verses may be contrasted with others that refer to the Jews and Christians as invoking the wrath of God for various reasons, including error and disbelief and their rebelliousness against God and the prophets. The Qur'an recognizes that among all faiths, including Muslims, are those who act unjustly. Yet individual Qur'anic and biblical verses that Jews, Christians, and Muslims employed in polemical writings against one another cannot alone explain the complex relationship between the religions, individuals, and groups within Islamic society.⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to look at the historical context in order to better understand the dynamics of Muslim-Jewish relations.

The earliest encounters between Muslims and Jews occurred with the rise of Islam during the seventh century; 610 marks the first revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad by the angel Gabriel. By contrast, the oldest Jewish communities in the Near East and North Africa existed from the time of the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem in BCE 586 and of the Second Temple in 70 CE. Throughout the Middle Ages, Jewish communities existed in Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen, and North Africa.

The Jewish tribes of the Hijāz largely depended upon date farming and trade, as did their non-Jewish counterparts. In the earliest Muslim accounts, the Prophet Muhammad formed a confederation with the three largest Jewish tribes of Medina: Banū Qaynuqā', Banū Al-Naḍīr, and Banū Qurayza. The tribes were accused variously of conspiring against Muhammad with the Prophet's own polytheist tribe of Quraysh, which persecuted him and the nascent Muslim community, or violating non-belligerency pacts, including

the Constitution of Medina.⁶ The Prophet had the adult males of the Banū Qurayṣa killed for allying with Quraysh in battle against him. He banished the Banū Qaynuqā' and the Banū al-Naḍir from Medina and seized their properties.⁷ Other smaller Jewish tribes continued to support the Muslim community as reflected in historical sources, including the Constitution of Medina.

A pivotal document for understanding Muslim-Jewish relations in the early Islamic period is the Constitution of Medina (Arab. *ṣahīfat al-Madīna*, *mīthāq al-Madīna*, *dustūr al-Madīna*), which is believed to be the oldest constitution from the Middle Ages, dating to shortly after the Prophet's emigration (Arab. *Hijra*) to Yathrib (later renamed the City of the Prophet (Arab. *Madīnat al-Nabī*)) in 622. The constitution was a cornerstone in defining the relationship between the Muslim community and the Jews of Medina. The constitution contains sixty-three articles pertaining to the various tribes, including the Jewish tribes, and their responsibilities. The relevant articles, which are preserved in Ibn Hishām's biography of the Prophet, are as follows:⁸

This is a document of the Prophet Muhammad between the believers and Muslims of Quraysh and Yathrib and those who follow them and are attached to them and who strive along with them.⁹

They are a distinct community apart from all others. (*umma min dūn al-nās*)

15. The security (*dhimma*) of God is one; the granting of "neighbourly protection" by the least of them [the believers] is binding on them; the believers are patrons of one another to the exclusion of [other] people.
16. Whoever of the Jews follows us has the [same] help and support [as the believers], so long as they are not wronged [by him] and he does not help [others] against them.
24. The Jews bear expenses along with the believers so long as they continue at war.
25. The Jews of Banū 'Awf are a community (*umma*) along with the believers. To the Jews their religion and to the Muslims their religion. [This applies] both to their clients and to themselves, with the exception of anyone who has done wrong or acted treacherously; he brings evil only on himself and on his household.
31. For the Jews of Banū Tha'laba the like of what is for the Jews of Banū 'Awf, with the exception of anyone who has done wrong or acted treacherously; he brings evil only on himself and his household.
32. Jafna, a subdivision (*baṭn*) of Tha'laba, are like them.
33. For Banū al-Shuṭayba the like of what is for the Jews of Banū 'Awf; honourable dealing [comes] before treachery.
34. The clients of Tha'laba are like them.
35. The *biṭāna* of [particular] Jews are as themselves.
36. No one of them [those belonging to the Umma] may go out [to war] without the permission of Muhammad (peace be upon him), but he is not restrained from taking vengeance for wounds. Whoever acts rashly, it [involves] only himself and his household, except where a man has been wronged. God is the truest [fulfiller] of this [document].
37. It is for the Jews to bear their expenses and for the Muslims to bear their expenses. Between them [that is, to one another] there is help against whoever wars against the people of this document. Between them is sincere friendship, and honourable dealing, not treachery. A man is not guilty of treachery through [the act of] his confederate. There is help for [or, help is to be given to] the person wronged.

38. The Jews bear expenses along with the believers so long as they continue at war.
39. The valley of Yathrib is sacred for the people of this document.
40. The “protected neighbour” (*jār*) is as the man himself so long as he does no harm and does not act treacherously.
44. Between them [the people of this document] is help against whoever suddenly attacks Yathrib.
45. Whenever they are summoned to conclude and accept a treaty, they conclude and accept it; when they in turn summon to the like of that, it is for them upon the believers, except whoever wars about religion; for [incumbent on] each man is his share from their side which is towards them.
46. The Jews of al-Aws, both their clients and themselves, are in the same position as belongs to the people of this document while they are thoroughly honourable in their dealings with the people of this document. Honourable dealing [comes] before treachery.

The word *umma*, or community of believers, in article 1 refers to Muslims as belonging to the Umma. In article 25, the Jews of Banū ‘Awf are designated as an Umma, which is not mentioned specifically in regard to the other Jewish tribes and subtribes. Fred Donner has controversially argued that the Umma included Jewish and Christian believers (*mu’minūn*) from the very first and that the Umma as we know it today did not crystallize until the reign of the Umayyad caliph ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān (r. 685–705).¹⁰ However, the largely accepted traditional view is that the Umma consisted only of Muslims and that it maintained non-belligerency treaties with other tribes. Article 38 stipulates that Jews, like Muslims, contribute money to the war effort against other tribes. Article 39 designates Yathrib (Medina) as a sacred precinct for all those tribes party to the constitution.

The Arabian Jewish tribes, like their Muslim counterparts, were part of the fabric of Arabian society. The tribes continued to play an important role despite the fact that the Prophet Muhammad, in constituting the Umma, sought to subsume the tribal identity to that of the Umma. According to the Islamic sources, Muhammad fought the Jewish tribes who conspired against him and who were allied to the Quraysh, Muhammad’s adversaries. Yet violence committed against the Banū Qurayza cannot be used to explain the nature of the relationship between Muslims and Jews throughout the Middle Ages. The fluid nature of tribal societies may be compared with feudal European society, with the important difference that in the latter Jews were the subject of whispering campaigns, blood libels, and pogroms. The Jewish communities of Europe were seen as Christ killers and the enemies of Christians and were severely persecuted.¹¹

The Pact of ‘Umar (‘Ahd ‘Umar)

One of the most controversial documents for the study of Muslim–non-Muslim relations, Muslim–Christians relations in particular, is the Pact of ‘Umar, which was attributed to the second caliph ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 634–644). The pact between Muslims and Christians was at times employed as a means to regulate the behaviour of non-Muslims in society and to prevent them from potentially influencing Muslims. ‘Umar enjoined that the poll tax (*jizya*) collected from non-Muslims be distributed to the poor of the People of the Book, not just to Muslims. In one paradigmatic account, the caliph encounters a blind old Jewish beggar and orders that he not have to pay the poll tax. As A. S. Tritton indicates, the tax was not to be levied on the indigent. Moreover, it is reported that on his deathbed, ‘Umar enjoined his

successor “to be kind to the dhimmīs, to keep their covenant, to protect them, and not to burden them above their strength.”¹²

The text of the pact is worth quoting:

The Pact of ‘Umar

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

This is a writing to Umar from the Christians of such and such a city. When You [Muslims] marched against us [Christians]: we asked of you protection for ourselves, our posterity, our possessions, and our co-religionists;

- 1 And we made this stipulation with you, that we will not erect in our city or the suburbs any new monastery, church, cell or hermitage;
- 2 That we will not repair any of such buildings that may fall into ruins, or renew those that may be situated in the Muslim quarters of the town;
- 3 That we will not refuse the Muslims entry into our churches either by night or by day;
- 4 That we will open the gates wide to passengers and travellers;
- 5 That we will receive any Muslim traveller into our houses and give him food and lodging for three nights;
- 6 That we will not harbor any spy in our churches or houses, or conceal any enemy of the Muslims [at least six of these laws were taken over from earlier Christian laws against (non-Muslims)];
- 7 That we will not teach our children the Qur’an;
- 8 That we will not make a show of the Christian religion nor invite any one to embrace it;
- 9 That we will not prevent any of our kinsmen from embracing Islam, if they so desire;
- 10 That we will honor the Muslims and rise up in our assemblies when they wish to take their seats;
- 11 That we will not imitate them in our dress, either in the cap, turban, sandals, or parting of the hair;
- 12 That we will not make use of their expressions of speech, nor adopt their surnames;
- 13 That we will not ride on saddles, or gird on swords, or take to ourselves arms or wear them, or engrave Arabic inscriptions on our rings;
- 14 That we will not sell wine; that we will shave the front of our heads; that we will keep to our own style of dress, wherever we may be; that we will wear girdles round our waists;
- 15 That we will not display the cross upon our churches or display our crosses or our sacred books in the streets of the Muslims, or in their market-places;
- 16 That we will strike the clappers in our churches lightly [wooden rattles or bells summoned the people to church or synagogue];
- 17 That we will not recite our services in a loud voice when a Muslim is present;
- 18 That we will not carry Palm branches [on Palm Sunday] or our images in procession in the streets;
- 19 That at the burial of our dead we will not chant loudly or carry lighted candles in the streets of the Muslims or their market places;
- 20 That we will not take any slaves that have already been in the possession of Muslims, nor spy into their houses; and that we will not strike any Muslim.

All this we promise to observe, on behalf of ourselves and our co-religionists, and receive protection from you in exchange; and if we violate any of the conditions of this agreement, then we forfeit your protection and you are at liberty to treat us as enemies and rebels.¹³

While initially certain rulers may have applied the provisions of the Pact to Christians, they inconsistently applied them to their Jewish subjects or did not apply them at all. In fact, it was not until 200 years after the Hijra, or the Emigration of the Prophet from Mecca to Yathrib, in 622, that most of the provisions came to be applied in differing forms.¹⁴ As Cohen indicates, wearing waistbands or girdles (*zunnār*) (provision 14) was a pre-Islamic Syriac Christian tradition adopted by the Christians themselves and subsequently inconsistently applied by some Muslim rulers to Jews and Christians.¹⁵ It is worth noting that the authenticity of this document has been called into question by scholars, most notably by A. S. Tritton, who (in the minority) argues against the Pact's authenticity, attributing it to the reign of the Umayyad caliph 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz (r. 717–720).¹⁶ Tritton maintains that Jewish and Christian subjects were not likely to seek to abase themselves by accepting certain conditions. Despite inconsistencies and possible later accretions, the Pact offers one model for understanding the ever-changing nature of medieval Islamic society and relations between followers of the Abrahamic faiths.

Dhimmīs

In Islamic legal terms, *dhimma* is a compact between Muslims and non-Muslim Peoples of Scripture (*Ahl al-Kitāb*): Jews, Christians, Sabaeans, and sometimes Zoroastrians and others, affording them protection of life and property and freedom of religion in return for the payment of the *jizya*, or poll tax, which was levied on all adult men of sound mind. The oldest attested usage of the word *dhimma* dates to a document from the 680s.¹⁷ During Ottoman rule in the Arabo-Islamic world, *jizya* was regarded as a tax in lieu of military service. These non-Muslims are collectively referred to as *dhimmīs*. Today *dhimma* as a legal concept is not practically applied in modern Middle Eastern and Islamic countries. During the Middle Ages, rulers inconsistently applied discriminatory measures against Jews and Christians such as wearing different-coloured clothing, not repairing or building new places of worship, riding on beasts of burden, and the like. To what extent were certain discriminatory measures enforced and under what circumstances? At the time of the Prophet Muhammad, such measures did not exist for either Jews or Christians. Under such later dynasties as the Fāṭimids, discriminatory measures were enforced and at times rescinded.

During the reign of the Shi'i Ismā'īlī Fāṭimid ruler of Egypt al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (r. 996–1021), Jews and Christians were at times persecuted and forced to wear distinguishing clothing and their places of worship were destroyed. However, this cannot be taken as the norm throughout the Middle Ages. Periods of despotic rule meant that the population, including Jews and Christians, suffered greatly. As discussed later in this chapter (see p. 28), persecution of Jews was also prevalent in the later Middle Ages and early modern periods in Iran under the Shi'i Safavid (1501–1722) and Qajar dynasties (1794–1925).¹⁸

Christians and Jews attained prominent positions from the tenth century onward. According to the geographer al-Muqaddasī (d. 991), Christians in Syria and Egypt were clerks and physicians and occasionally ministers.¹⁹ Among the most prominent Jews in the Fāṭimid court was the Baghdadi trader Ya'qūb ibn Killis (d. 991), who became vizier to two Fāṭimid caliphs after converting to Islam and who appointed Christians and Jews to administrative posts in government. Ibn Killis was known for his love of learning and for the famous weekly discussion sessions at his residence in which he debated Jews and Christians.²⁰

Interpreting medieval history

A number of theories are relevant to understanding the history of Muslim-Jewish relations. The “Lachrymose conception” of Jewish history is epitomized in the work of the nineteenth-century Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz (d. 1891). During the nineteenth century, European Jewish authors invoked medieval Al-Andalus in their writings to express the ideals of a utopian society while lamenting the poor state and suffering of Jews in Europe. By contrast, in 1937 the Columbia University medievalist Salo Baron (d. 1989) published his magnum opus, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, in which he argued against the “Lachrymose conception of Jewish history.”

In modern-day discourse, the Egyptian-born polemicist Gisèle Littman, née Orebi, who writes under the pen name Bat Ye’or (Daughter of the Nile), coined the word *Dhimmitude* to refer to what she regards as the abject state of suffering of Jews and Christians under Islam in the Middle East and North Africa from the rise of Islam until the present. She attempts to demonstrate that persecution was the norm in the Islamic world. This distortion of history is known as the *neo-lachrymose* conception of history, a term coined by Princeton historian Mark Cohen to refer to a perceived state of endless suffering and persecution. Mark Cohen and Norman Stillman have shown how Jews under Islamic rule fared better than in Christian Europe.²¹ Evidence from the Cairo Geniza and Arabic sources corroborates this. An alternative interpretation of *dhimma* is offered by the French Catholic priest and historian Louis Gardet (d. 1986), who regards *dhimma* as a “form of generosity, a participation in sacred hospitality.”²² The *dhimma* contract guaranteed certain fundamental rights in return for payment of the poll tax, yet this did not prevent abuses or rulers further restricting the rights of non-Muslims. Unlike Jews and Christians, Muslims paid the *zakāt* or alms tax prescribed in the Qur’an, which was 2.5 percent of their entire wealth.

Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism (see also Chapter 18, this volume) did not exist in medieval Islam, nor did anti-Jewish hatred exist in the form that it does today. However, acts of violence did occur in the medieval Islamic world, though not on the scale they did in medieval Europe, as is discussed later.²³ Infrequent acts of violence (as discussed later) were committed against Jews and Christians owing to a number of factors, including jealousy about the status of individuals appointed to government and administrative posts and perceived favouritism toward Jews at the expense of Muslims. With the rise of the puritanical Berber Almohad dynasty in North Africa (discussed later), all non-Muslims were forced to convert to Islam or risk being killed. This caused many to dissimulate and flee to the Christian kingdoms of the north or to North Africa and Egypt.

Convivencia

In Al-Andalus, Muslims, Jews, and Christians lived in relative harmony. In 1948, the Spanish historian Américo Castro (d. 1972) applied the controversial term *convivencia* (lit. *living together*) to the state of coexistence among Muslims, Jews, and Christians in medieval Iberia.²⁴ *Convivencia* depicts a society characterized by a high degree of cultural development and refinement, as well as the exchange of ideas and mutual influences. Diametrically opposed to Castro was Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz (d. 1984), a diehard Spanish Republican who saw the pre-Islamic Iberian past as the basis for the modern Spanish nation, rejecting that Jews

and Muslims had a pivotal role to play in the transformation of Spanish identity. In modern discourse throughout the Arab and Islamic world, one finds an idealization, a glorification of Muslim–non-Muslim relations that is contrary to reality. A measured approach is called for. Today historians continue to debate the accuracy of *convivencia* and whether, for instance, it is applicable to regions outside of Al-Andalus. Kenneth Wolf employs the word *multiculturalism* to describe Islam in the peninsula: “. . . historians began to see it as the *sine qua non* of peninsula multiculturalism, Spain’s most distinctive contribution to medieval history.”²⁵ In an article on Sephardic Jewry and *convivencia*, Benjamin Gampel instead emphasizes a “pluralistic” society characterized by the exchange of ideas and explores the factors that contributed to the decline and ultimate destruction of the Jewish communities during the Reconquista in 1492.²⁶ Did acts of violence against Jews and others in Al-Andalus preclude the emergence of *convivencia*? Acts of violence did not prevent the exchange of ideas between the Islamic and Jewish traditions (see chapters 5, 6, and 9, this volume). As David Nirenberg has shown, some of the most virulent hostility to Jews in the Iberian Peninsula came from Christian converts to Islam.²⁷

Alternatives to *convivencia*, such as *coexistence*, *tolerance*, and *commensality*, have been proposed. Yet, like *convivencia*, each word has its limitations and is applicable to certain social, cultural, and intellectual contexts. Despite this, the term *convivencia* remains useful for explaining the periods of prosperity that existed in Al-Andalus, Baghdad, and elsewhere.

Golden ages

A golden age in any people’s history is a historical period characterized by the development of institutions of learning and the dissemination of different branches of secular and religious knowledge, including literature, theology, philosophy, science, and art (see chapters 4–7, 9, and 23, this volume). Generally, political stability along with a state of peace with neighbouring territories was attained in order to maintain such an age. However, this does not imply that minority communities living under majority rule lived in a utopian state or in perfect harmony with the majority (for purposes of our discussion, the Muslim majority). Such a situation has never existed in the history of humanity. Modern-day studies often point to multiple golden ages in the history of Islam. This designation is often applied to the period of efflorescence of any Islamic dynasty. Similarly, modern-day discourse refers to the Jewish Golden Age or the Golden Age of Hebrew literature (tenth through twelfth centuries) in Al-Andalus, which is exemplified by literary and linguistic models inspired by Arabic models (see Chapter 6, this volume). Yet this golden age within a golden age occurred against the backdrop of political instability after the fall of the caliphate of Córdoba.

The first golden age in Islamic history occurred during the reign of the ‘Abbāsid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 786–809) and continued until the Mongol destruction of Baghdad in 1256. Under Hārūn al-Rashīd, Bayt al-Ḥikma (or the House of Wisdom), an academy of higher learning, was established. It attracted Muslim, Christian, and Jewish scholars, translators, poets, theologians, and scientists and contained many manuscripts in such diverse areas as philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, engineering, and medicine. There Christian and other translators undertook translating texts from ancient Greek, Syriac, Sanskrit, and Pahlavi into Arabic, thus reviving and disseminating the knowledge of the ancients. One of the leading translators was the Assyrian Christian physician Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (d. 873). Under the reign of Hārūn’s son al-Ma’mūn (r. 813–833), known for reconciling reason and faith and for his patronage of music, the House of Wisdom was expanded. Before becoming caliph, al-Ma’mūn was known to hold disputation sessions with scholars, including Jews and

Christians. One story recounted in the Qur'anic exegesis on Qur'an 15:9 of the Andalusī scholar Al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273) involves a Jewish scholar who excelled at Hebrew and Arabic calligraphy. As the story goes, he became a Muslim a year after first mentioning his Jewish faith to al-Ma'mūn, explaining that he copied the Torah and then, after becoming a Christian, the Gospels, both of which he distorted by subtracting and adding verses and then passed off to buyers. When he attempted this with the Qur'an, he was found out by a buyer and became a Muslim. The point of this paradigmatic story is to illustrate the inimitability of the Qur'an. Al-Ma'mūn was also a patron of the sciences and had Jewish and Zoroastrian astrologers at court.

Building the Bayt al-Ḥikma required the acquisition of manuscripts concerning the knowledge of ancient civilizations. Al-Ma'mūn received permission from the Byzantine emperor Theophilus (r. 829–842) to bring back manuscripts and dispatched a group of leading translators and scholars to Constantinople to retrieve Greek works, including Ptolemy's *Almagest*.²⁸ The House of Wisdom was destroyed during the Mongol invasion of Baghdad in 1258. Jewish scholars were responsible for reintroducing these works to Europe during the late Middle Ages.

The Dār al-Ḥikma established in Cairo under the Fāṭimid caliph al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh came to rival the Bayt al-Ḥikma in Baghdad. The former, which also served as a centre for Ismā'īlī missionary activity, was dismantled with the Ottoman conquest of Egypt, and its contents, like the contents of other libraries, were sent to Istanbul.

A second golden age occurred during the rule of the Córdoba caliph 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, whose library rivalled the Dār al-Ḥikma and included many acquisitions from the Islamic east.

Economy and commerce

Against the backdrop of the Mediterranean Sea, which facilitated economic and cross-cultural exchanges between Europe and the Islamic world, Jewish merchants and traders, like their Muslim and Christian counterparts, had an important role to play not only in the circulation of goods but also in the circulation of religious and secular ideas.²⁹ The Radhanites, a group of Jewish merchants who most probably hailed from southern Mesopotamia, transported oil, silk, perfumes, spices, and slaves. Among the most prominent India Ocean merchants in the medieval Islamic world was the Ben Yiju family who originated from present-day Tunisia. Family members were also scholars. The life of one of its members, Abraham, who was a merchant and scholar, is well documented in the Cairo Geniza.³⁰ Jews were also involved in trade, tanning leather, dyeing, money lending, the slave trade, and the making of eunuchs in Al-Andalus, among other professions.³¹

Muslims, Jews, and Christians often lived near and around their respective holy places; during the Middle Ages this was not for the purpose of discrimination but rather to facilitate religious observance and access to places of worship. In medieval Cairo, for instance, Jews and Christians lived in particular neighbourhoods before the Islamic conquest of Egypt in the seventh century, and this continued throughout the Middle Ages.³² In fact, the neighbourhoods were diversified. It wasn't until the early modern era in Morocco, for example, that Jews lived in walled quarters, referred to as *mellah*.³³

Violence, oppression, and crisis

Eruptions of violence, sometimes major, characterized medieval societies, whether in Europe or the Middle East. Boundaries between dynasties and empires shifted, and engaging in warfare against rivals was the norm. However, no set pattern to violent outbreaks against minority communities existed, and the results were often unpredictable. A number of factors contributed to violence within the urban environment. First, violence was invariably linked to political instability, dynastic rivalry, and jealousy among troops, which occasionally led to the enlivening of passions of the crowds and a state of disorder. Such a state of affairs also led to the rise of false messiahs among Muslims and Jews.

In 813 during the reign of the ‘Abbāsīd caliph Al-Ma’mūn (r. 813–833), the ruler of Ḥarrān in Syria ordered the destruction of newly built churches, which he reasoned violated the Pact of ‘Umar. A synagogue was also destroyed. The ruler had a change of heart and the places of worship were rebuilt.³⁴

In Yemen in 1165, ‘Abd al-Nabī ibn Maḥdī’s (r. 1159–1173) father, ‘Alī, seized power from the Ayyūbid dynasty who ruled Yemen in the name of Saladin (Ṣalāh al-Dīn). Saladin liberated Jerusalem from the Crusades in 1187. ‘Abd al-Nabī undertook forcibly converting Jews to Islam. Moreover, he created a cult centre at his father’s tomb to which he commanded people to make pilgrimage instead of to Mecca. Also at this time, a Jewish convert to Islam announced that he was the *Maḥdī*, or long-awaited Messiah. It was said that he created a syncretic religion that attracted Jews and Muslims. This so disturbed the head of the Jewish community, Rabbi Jacob ben Nathanel Al-Fayyūmī, that he wrote the great theologian, philosopher, and physician Maimonides (d. 1204), who was a confidant and physician to Saladin and the Ayyūbid dynasty (see chapters 4 and 9, this volume).³⁵ This pattern of would-be Messiahs, which led to the collection of wealth in the name of the ruler or the would-be Messiah, conversion of individuals, and the imprisonment and killing of the pretender and his followers, would replicate itself among Jews and Muslims throughout the Middle Ages. One of the most famous examples is of the Kabbalist Sephardic Rabbi Shabbatai Zevi (d. 1676) discussed later.

Rulers also employed violence against scholars and theologians, often resulting in a backlash. In Al-Andalus (Sp. Andalucía, known in Hebrew as *Sefarad*) or Muslim Iberia, rulers such as Al-Ḥakam II (r. 961–976) suppressed the role of the religious scholars or *ulama* and promoted military solutions in his politics. This frustration, along with the people’s dissatisfaction with high taxes, created a climate in which the Party Kingdoms (*ṭawā’if*) (r. 1031–1095) – the rulers were known as Party Kings or *mulūk al-ṭawā’if* – emerged out of the chaos that ensued after the fall of the caliphate of Córdoba in 1031. In the turmoil of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Granada, which had an important Jewish community, witnessed a period of growth. There Talmud scholar and poet Samuel ibn Naghrella (d. 1056), a man of letters, emerged as a powerful yet loyal figure. Samuel worked his way up to the post of assistant vizier to the Berber ruler Ḥabbūs al-Muẓaffar (r. 1019–1038). In 1027 he became head (*nagīd*) of the Jewish community. Upon Ḥabbūs’s death, his son Bādīs succeeded him, and Samuel was confirmed as vizier and commander of the army.

In contrast with his father Samuel, Yehoseph came to be regarded as overly ambitious, consequently suffering a tragic fate.³⁶ One explanation is that he was seen as too prideful and favouring the Jewish community at the expense of the Berbers, who grew jealous of his influence. Consequently, in 1066 Granada’s Jewish community was massacred. The Jewish scholar Abraham ben Dawud of Toledo (1161) wrote of him: “He was not humble like his father because he grew up in riches, and he never had to bear the yoke [of poverty and

discipline] in his youth. He was proud to his own hurt, and the Berber princes were jealous of him.”³⁷

By the time the puritanical Berber Almohad (Arab. al-Muwaḥḥidūn, lit. *unifiers*) dynasty arose in North Africa and conquered Al-Andalus from the Almoravids (Arab. Al-Murābiṭūn) dynasty in 1150, Andalusi society had been politically fragmented since the fall of the Umayyad caliphate of Córdoba in 1031. People felt sheer terror. Communities fell. Scholars were slaughtered. Along with Muslims, the Jews and Christians of Al-Andalus suffered.

The Jewish sage and poet Ibn Ezra, while living in exile in Provence in present-day France, brilliantly captures the sorrow over the loss of the cities of Al-Andalus and North Africa to the Almohads. In the elegy “Ahah, yarad ‘al Sefarad” (O woe, misfortune befell Sefarad), Ibn Ezra writes movingly of the fall of centres of learning to the Almohads, the indiscriminate slaughter of scholars, and the forced conversion and martyrdom of Jews, despite the Qur’anic verse, “There is no compulsion in religion” (Qur’an 2:256).³⁸ Another witness to the slaughter of innocents during the initial phase of Almohad rule was the philosopher and Talmudic scholar Joseph Ibn ‘Aqnin (d. ca. 1220), who regarded the persecution of Jews as religious in nature.³⁹

This loss of homeland may be compared with the fall of Al-Andalus to the Christian kingdoms. Ṣāliḥ b. Sharīf Al-Rundī (d. 1285), a *ḥadīth* scholar and jurist from the Andalusi city of Ronda, memorializes in his famous Nūniyya the Andalusi cities that fell to the Castilian monarch Fernando III. Córdoba had fallen in 1236. Al-Rundī fled his native Ronda in 1248 upon its fall, taking refuge in Ceuta on the North African coast. Like Ibn Ezra, he expresses his sense of loss and despair over the loss of his homeland, the loss of Córdoba as a home of the sciences and scholars and, above all, the loss of innocents.⁴⁰

Moreover, Al-Rundī and Ibn Ezra invoke memories of places no longer part of “our Al-Andalus” – places that were desecrated by the invading Almohad and Christian armies. The sacred topography of Andalusia with its mosques and synagogues, its ablution fountains, its Qur’ans and Torah scrolls, its academies of learning was irreparably effaced and destroyed. The scholars of both communities were slaughtered.⁴¹ The poems of Al-Rundī and Ibn Ezra invoke a collective sense of belonging to their homeland which, along with the academies, was destroyed and the scholars slaughtered.

Jews, Christians, and Muslims often came together against oppression, as in the following example: In 971 in Tustar (present-day Iran), an oppressive vizier extracted money from Jews and Christians as well as Muslims, whereupon they took to their places of worship in prayer against oppressors.⁴²

Galut (Exile)

The notion of *galut*, or exile, figured in medieval Jewish writings. *Galut* refers to the time after the destruction of the first Jewish temple in 586 CE and the dispersion of Jews to Babylon. Jewish travelers and pilgrims to the Holy Land often commented about the state of their Jewish brethren. The occurrence of the word *galut* designating exile from the Holy Land is particularly pronounced from the fifteenth century onward. In 1488, the Jewish traveller Rabbi Obadiah of Bertinoro (in present-day Italy) writes:

In truth, the Jews do not experience *galut* from the Arabs at all in this place. I have traveled the entire country ... and no one says a negative word. Rather, they are very kind to the foreigner, especially to one who does not know the language. When they see many Jews together, they do not express any envy.⁴³

Tolerance versus toleration

The modern-day notions of toleration and tolerance cannot be applied to pre-modern societies without proper qualification. In this context, *toleration* merely denotes having forbearance in practice and in law for the other – their religion, religious practices, and customs – whereas *tolerance* is a persistent manifestation of toleration bordering on openness, which manifests itself in contacts and exchanges between individuals and groups within a society.⁴⁴ The Qur'an encourages a state of tolerance between Muslims and Jews and Christians in engaging with the other.

One must consider the interaction of individuals and groups within society. While violent outbreaks suspend tolerance, they do not negate it. Jonathan Ray rejects the overemphasis in scholarship on tolerance as exemplified by convivencia and persecution. Both categories distort the definition of *tolerance*. Instead, Ray prefers to look at the interaction of individuals with one another, not merely focusing on the interaction of the three faiths.⁴⁵

In *Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*, María Rosa Menocal characterizes the culture of medieval Al-Andalus as one of tolerance and symbiosis. What does tolerance mean within the context of medieval Islamic society? Modern Arabic scholarly discourse on the Middle Ages and interfaith relations characterizes the Golden Age of Al-Andalus and the second Fāṭimid and Ayyūbid periods as eras of religious tolerance (*tasāmuḥ dīnī*). Such a depiction affords certain similarities with the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* School, which expounds the notion of an interfaith utopia under Islam.⁴⁶ Thus, one may speak of periods of tolerance as well as of intolerance.

Al-Andalus

In 711, the military commander Ṭāriq ibn Ziyād (d. 720) conquered the Iberian Peninsula, which was ruled by the Visigoths from the fifth through eighth centuries. The Jews welcomed Ṭāriq as a liberator and, according to some accounts, even opened the gates for him and his army. Unlike the Christians, the Jewish communities of Iberia did not pose a threat to the Muslims and were likely to be more trusted at court.

During the reign of 'Abd al-Raḥmān II (r. 822–852), the Baghdadi musician and arbiter of style and etiquette Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Nāfi' (d. 857), who was better known as Ziryāb, came to Córdoba where he became a major influence on Andalusī society, from table etiquette and cooking to bathing, hairstyles, hygiene, shampoo, and the use of perfumes. Al-Andalus was light-years ahead of the rest of Europe.

Muslims, Jews, and Christians in Al-Andalus were part of the most significant cultural revival in the history of the Islamic west during the reign of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, which is epitomized as a golden age. Modern-day studies in the Arab Middle East emphasize a golden age in the Iberian Peninsula existing down to the fall of Granada in 1492, yet there is no evidence, based on literary or historical sources, to sustain this thesis except in a limited sense.

The earliest recorded observations attesting to the splendour of Córdoba are from the tenth century. The educated nun Hroswitha of Gandersheim in present-day Germany, who was involved in diplomatic contacts at the court of Otto I in 955, heard from the Andalusī Christian emissary Bishop Racemundo about the unparalleled state of learning in Córdoba. Racemundo accompanied the vizier Samuel ibn Naghrella. Hroswitha later wrote referring to Córdoba:

The brilliant ornament of the world shone in the west, a noble city newly known for the military prowess that its Hispanic colonizers had brought, Córdoba was its name and it was wealthy and famous and known for its pleasures and resplendent in all things, and especially for its seven streams of wisdom [the trivium and quadrivium] (i.e., grammar, logic, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and music) and as much for its constant victories.⁴⁷

Convivencia was an urban phenomenon, as much of the interaction of the intellectuals and the elite took place in the cities. *Convivencia* is but one label used to describe the state of coexistence among Jews, Muslims, and Christians (depending upon the historical period under consideration). Scholars have also suggested alternatives. Goitein and Lewis have referred to *symbiosis*, while others such as Norman Stillman have used the word *commensality* (lit. *coming together at the table*) in a cultural sense.⁴⁸

Under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, one of the most skilled Jewish diplomats emerged – Ḥaṣḥai ibn Shaprut (d. ca.975), who led Muslim armies to defeat the Christian kingdoms. He was also an accomplished diplomat who used his skill to defeat the enemies of the Córdoba caliphate. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III also faced the threat of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate in the East and the Fāṭimid caliphate in Egypt; thus the caliphate of Córdoba sought an alliance with the Byzantine Empire to serve as a buffer against the rival caliphates’ territorial ambitions.

Conversion to Islam

One issue that recurs in modern-day discourse is whether Jews and Christian were converted to Islam by force during the Middle Ages. It was not until the twelfth century that the majority of Greater Syria became Muslim.⁴⁹ Generally, a variety of reasons prompted individuals to convert to another faith, including religious conviction, economic incentive, or the threat of death. Elites and others in urban centres were often motivated by social and economic privileges gained by converting. Yet converts also saw conversion as a preferable alternative to paying the poll tax. In addition to the Prophet’s wives Ṣafīyya and Rayḥāna, the earliest recorded Jewish converts to Islam include the Arabian Rabbi Abdullāh ibn Salām (d. 630), known for his great learning and piety, and the Yemenite Ka’b al-Aḥbār, (d. ca.652), who was known for collecting and transmitting the Israelite traditions or biblical and exegetical stories and legends concerning the prophets and patriarchs.

As previously discussed, the Almohad invasion of Al-Andalus and North Africa resulted in the forcible conversion of Jews and Christians to Islam under the threat of death despite the Qur’anic commandment, “There is no compulsion in religion” (Qur’an 2:256). One common phenomenon was dissimulation. Such scholars as Maimonides, who fled Córdoba with the Almohad invasions, and others feigned conversion to Islam to allow them to flee with their lives. Such exceptions do not prove the rule.

Converts to Islam sometimes produced polemical works against their former faith, as in the case of Shmu’el al-Maghribī (d. ca.1180), who was a Moroccan rabbi.

In 1492, the Iberian monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella initiated the Inquisition against Jews and Muslims, forcing them to renounce their faiths and convert to Christianity or else face death. The Ottoman Empire provided a refuge for the Jews, as did North Africa. In the early modern era, the Ottoman *millet* system, whereby the state recognized the diverse religious communities, worked well to promote harmony among Muslims and non-Muslims. As Karen Barkey notes:

The other part of the equation of tolerance was the practice of diversity and inter-religious peace between Muslims and non-Muslims. That is, Ottoman tolerance was Ottoman policy with regard to the rule of religious and ethnic communities. Ottomans took pride in their cosmopolitan and pluralistic foresight on rule.⁵⁰

A prominent example of conversion is the Sephardic Rabbi Shabbetai Zevi (d. 1676) in Ottoman Anatolia, who proclaimed himself the Messiah and gained a large following among the Jewish communities of Europe and Morocco but who subsequently was imprisoned and given the choice of being executed, having his Messiah status tested, or converting to Islam. Zevi nominally converted to Islam, as did his followers, who became known as the *Dönme*.⁵¹

The Shi'i Safavid dynasty and the successor Qajar dynasty, by contrast, sought to force Jews and Christians to convert to Shi'i Islam. During the reign of Shāh 'Abbās I (r. 1588–1629) and throughout the seventeenth century, the Safavid dynasty persecuted Jewish communities and indeed forced them to convert to Shi'i Islam.⁵²

The Cairo Geniza

The Cairo Geniza is a cache of nearly 300,000 fragments of medieval documents written in Hebrew, Judeo-Arabic, and Aramaic and rediscovered in the Ben Ezra Synagogue of old Cairo during the nineteenth century. The Geniza, which in Hebrew means “a storeroom,” was a place where sacred and secular documents from as early as the eighth century and as late as the nineteenth century were discarded. Like Muslims, Jews buried their unwanted documents. The Geniza sheds light on the life of the Jewish communities of the southern Mediterranean and the Middle East. It includes literary, theological, and philosophical texts as well as records of the communal courts (marriage and divorce records) and the commercial and economic activities (lists of goods and debtors) of the Jewish communities of Egypt, North Africa, and the Middle East.

One of the most important works for understanding the dynamic of Jewish-Muslim relations in the Middle Ages is the doyen of Geniza studies' S. D. Goitein's (d. 1985) six-volume *Mediterranean Society*, which illuminates the world of the Cairo Geniza by shedding light on the economic, literary, and social aspects of Jewish life on the Mediterranean during the Middle Ages.

Today, cutting-edge Geniza research is being undertaken on the legal *responsa* and court judgments, which demonstrate the extent to which Jewish petitioners sought legal redress from Muslim judges and courts. For instance, where a rabbinical court found for the husband in a divorce proceeding, a wife may have sought relief from a Muslim *qāḍī*, or judge.⁵³ Similarly, under the influence of Islamic law in which Muslim women were allowed to maintain control of their dowries and wages upon marriage, Jewish women sought relief since, in Jewish law, the husband controlled the dowry and any wages belonged to him.

During the sixteenth century, the Jews of Egypt composed a *megilla*, or a scroll in Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic, to be delivered from a local Egyptian official who rebelled against the Ottomans. As Cohen notes, the occasion was observed in the 1950s.⁵⁴

Communitas

The word *communitas*, which means “coming together”, was employed by the anthropologist Victor Turner (d. 1983) to describe a state in which the pilgrim to a holy place suspended his identity, set out on pilgrimage, and came together with other pilgrims at a shrine or holy place.

Pilgrimage was as important a phenomenon in the Islamic world as it was in medieval Europe. It attracted not only Christian pilgrims but also Jewish and Muslim pilgrims to their respective shrines and to common shrines. Some Jewish and Muslim theologians condemned visiting tombs and shrines as polytheistic, while others condoned certain practices associated with it.⁵⁵ Apart from Mecca and Medina, Muslims made pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the third holiest pilgrimage place in Islam. Jews visited shrines in the Galilee and elsewhere. Among the most important Jewish shrines were those of the Prophet Ezekiel south of Baghdad, Ezra near Basra, Daniel at Susa (Persian *Shūsh*) in present-day Iran, the Synagogue of Moses at Dammūh in Egypt, and various shrines dedicated to the prophet Elijah throughout the Middle East.⁵⁶

While *communitas* was first applied to the context of pilgrimage, it is to a certain extent applicable to processions at times of crisis and external threats to the city and its inhabitants. One example mentioned by the traveller Ibn Baṭṭūṭa in his *Travels* is of the great pestilence in Damascus in July 1348:

...They all went out together on foot, holding [Qur'ans] in their hands, and the amir barefooted. The procession was joined by the entire population of the town, men and women, small and large; the Jews came with their Book of the Law and the Christians with their Gospel, all of them with their women and children. The whole concourse, weeping and supplicating and seeking the favour of God through His Books and His Prophets, made their way to the Mosque of the Footprints, and there they remained in supplication and invocation until near midday. They then returned to the city and held the Friday service, and God lightened their affliction; for the number of deaths in a single day at Damascus did not attain two thousand, while in Cairo and Old Cairo it reached the figure of twenty-four thousand a day.⁵⁷

In times of crisis, the norm was for medieval Damascenes of different faiths to head out in procession bearing scriptures and visiting their respective holy places as well as shared places. In the preceding example, the Mosque of the Footprints (in the village by the name near Damascus) was believed to contain a footprint of the Prophet Moses, which was also believed to be that of the Prophet Muhammad.

Conclusion

All civilizations and societies are characterized by periods of political instability, wars, and outbreaks of violence, just as they are by periods of cultural efflorescence, innovation in religious learning, and different degrees of cultural exchange. Islamic civilization fostered creativity among the various Jewish and Christian communities, who played an active role in translating works from various ancient languages into Arabic. Medieval scholars revived the Hebrew language and composed Hebrew poetry inspired by Arabic motifs.

Tolerance for Jews and Christians existed despite occasional outbreaks of violence and even rarer pogroms. Above all, a sense of pragmatism in an environment of relative tolerance existed in the medieval Islamic world whereby people of different faiths interacted with one another on a daily basis in the marketplace, in libraries, literary salons, and learned academies, at royal courts, and in other contexts. The history of interfaith relations in the medieval Islamic world has yet to be written.

Notes

- 1 Useful for a general understanding of the term *medieval* and non-European societies in general is Hiram Kümper, “The Term ‘Middle Ages’,” in *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms-Methods-Trends*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), pp. 1310–1319. For the Islamic context, see Timothy Reuter, *Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 32.
- 2 Also useful for framing the historical discussion in the Middle Eastern context is Norman Stillman et al., “Anti-Judaism/Antisemitism/Anti-Zionism,” in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, ed. Norman Stillman (http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-jews-in-the-islamic-world/anti-judaismantisemitismanti-zionism-COM_000492). (Accessed: August 2015) and, especially for the Islamic world, Gudrun Krämer, “Anti-Semitism in the Muslim World,” *Die Welt des Islams* 46 (2006): 243–276.
- 3 *Allah* is the Arabic word for God.
- 4 Translation is from Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an*.
- 5 Concerning Muslim-Jewish polemics, see Camilla Adang, Sabine Schmidtke. “Polemics (Muslim-Jewish),” in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World* (Brill Online, 2015). (Accessed: 1 August 2015). <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-jews-in-the-islamic-world/polemics-muslim-jewish-COM_0017750>
- 6 Relevant studies include R. B. Serjeant, “The Sunnah Jām’iah, pacts with the Yathrib Jews, and the Taḥrīm of Yathrib: analysis and translation of the documents comprised in the so-called ‘Constitution of Medina’,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 41:1(1978): 1–42.
- 7 A number of studies, which discuss the reports concerning the fate of these tribes, include Michael Lecker, *Muslims, Jews and Pagans: Studies on Early Islamic Medina* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), and W. M. Watt, “The condemnation of the Jews of Banū Qurayzah,” *Muslim World* 42 (1952): 160–171.
- 8 Articles 26–30 mention the names of five Jewish tribes whose rights are like those of the Banū ‘Awf. A useful website concerning the constitution, though not containing the Arabic, is <http://www.constitutionofmadina.com/blog/2012/02/22/constitution-of-medina-in-63-articles/>
- 9 The following contains variations from the translations of Watt and Stillman.
- 10 Fred M. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2010).
- 11 See, for instance, Mark Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, for a detailed comparison. Also for an historical overview and primary sources in translation, see Norman Stillman, *Jews of Arab Lands*.
- 12 Both episodes are quoted in A. S. Tritton, *Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects – A Critical Study of the Covenant of ‘Umar* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), p. 138.
- 13 Text from Jacob Marcus (with modifications): Jacob Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World: A Sourcebook 315–1791* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1938), pp. 13–15. Square brackets are Marcus’s. Text in public domain.
- 14 Tritton, p. 233.
- 15 Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, p. 62.
- 16 Tritton, p. 117.
- 17 See Robert Hoyland, “P. Nessana 77 Rediscovered and Dhimmat Allah,” in *Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts – Essays in Honor of Professor Patricia Crone*, eds. B. Sadeghi, A. Q. Ahmed, A. Silverstein, and R. Hoyland (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 51–71; also see “P. Nessana 77 – Earliest Papyrus Mentioning Dhimma, 60s AH / 680s CE,” <http://www.islamic-awareness.org/History/Islam/Papyri/PNess77.html> (includes images, Arabic text, and English translation). (Accessed: 20 July 2015).
- 18 Vera B. Moreen, David Yeroushalmi, and David Menashri, “Iran/Persia,” in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, exec. ed. Norman A. Stillman (Brill Online, 2015). http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-jews-in-the-islamic-world/iranpersia-COM_0011520 (Accessed: August 2015).
- 19 Tritton, *Caliphs and Their Subjects*, p. 25.
- 20 Mark Cohen and Sasson Somekh, “In the court of Ya‘qūb Ibn Killis: a fragment from the Cairo Genizah,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 80 (1990): 283–314.
- 21 See the discussion between Mark Cohen and Norman Stillman: Mark Cohen, “The Neo-Lachrymose Conception of Jewish-Arab History,” with a reply by Norman Stillman, *Tikkun* 6:3 (1991), pp. 55–64.

- 22 Quoted in Abdal Hakim Murad, *Qur'anic Truth and the Meaning of 'Dhimma'* (Dubai: Kalam Research and Media, 2010), p. 14. http://www.kalamresearch.com/~kalamres/pdf/dhimma_final.pdf (Accessed: 30 July 2015).
- 23 A comprehensive article dealing with the Middle Eastern context is Norman Stillman et al., "Anti-Judaism/Antisemitism/Anti-Zionism," in *Encyclopaedia of Jews in the Islamic World*. See also Mark Cohen, "Modern Myths of Muslim Anti-Semitism," in *Muslim Attitudes to Jews and Israel: The Ambivalences of Rejection, Antagonism, Tolerance and Cooperation* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), pp. 31–47.
- 24 Castro adapted this word from his mentor, the historian Ramón Menéndez-Pidal, who applied it to the Romance languages.
- 25 Kenneth Woolf, "Convivencia in medieval Spain: a brief history of an idea," in *Religion Compass*, p. 74.
- 26 Benjamin Gampel, "Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Medieval Iberia: Convivencia through the Eyes of Sephardic Jews," in *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain*, eds. Vivian Mann, Thomas Glick, and Jerrilynn Dodds (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1992), pp. 11–37.
- 27 David Nirenberg, "What can medieval Spain teach us about Muslim-Jewish relations?" *CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Journal* Spring/Summer (2002): 17–36. Also see his book, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).
- 28 See Ibn al-Nadīm, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, trans. Bayard Dodge, vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 584.
- 29 Concerning the Mediterranean Sea as a facilitator for the exchange of goods and ideas, see David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- 30 Letters concerning the Ben Yiju family were published in S. D. Goitein and Mordechai A. Friedman, *India Traders of the Middle Ages: Documents from the Cairo Geniza* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).
- 31 Tritton, pp. 93–94; An engaging reconstructed account of Abraham ben Yiju may be found in Amitav Ghosh, *In an Antique Land* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993).
- 32 Norman Stillman, "The Non-Muslim Communities: the Jewish community," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt: 640–1517*, ed. Carl F. Petry, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 202.
- 33 See, for instance, Emily Gottreich, *The Mellah of Marrakesh Jewish and Muslim Space in Morocco's Red City* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007).
- 34 Tritton, p. 48.
- 35 For a brief overview of the would-be Messiah and Maimonides's Epistle to the Yemen, see https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Epistle_to_Yemen/Complete. Also see Bat-Zion Eraqi-Klorman, "The Yemeni Messiah in the Time of Maimonides: Prelude for Future Messiahs," in *From Iberia to Diaspora: Studies in Sephardic History and Culture*, eds. Yedida Kalfon Stillman and Norman A. Stillman (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 129–138.
- 36 Concerning the vizierate of Yehoseph and the events of 1066, see most recently David Wasserstein, "A Family Story: Ambiguities of Jewish Identity in Medieval Islam," in *Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts: Essays in Honor of Professor Patricia Crone*, ed. Asad Q. Ahmed, Belnam Sadeghi, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2015) pp. 498–532.
- 37 Quoted in Jacob Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World: A Sourcebook, 315–1791* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1938), pp. 297–300, <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/hanagid.asp> (Accessed: 30 April 2016).
- 38 The English translation of the poem appears in Peter Cole (trans. and ed.), *The Dream of the Poem: Hebrew Poetry from Muslim and Christian Spain, 950–1492* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 181–182.
- 39 Norman Roth, *Jews, Visigoths, and Muslims in Medieval Spain: Cooperation and Conflict* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 124–125.
- 40 An English translation of the poem may be found in James Monroe (trans.), *Hispano-Arabic Poetry* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 332–334.
- 41 These words are from Josef Meri's Yedida K. Stillman Memorial Lecture, which he delivered at the University of Oklahoma in 2011.
- 42 Tritton, p. 131.
- 43 Quoted in Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, p. 193.

- 44 For a nuanced discussion of this point and more generally, see Reza Shah-Kazemi, *The Spirit of Tolerance in Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), p. 14.
- 45 Jonathan Ray, “Beyond tolerance and persecution: reassessing our approach to medieval convivencia,” *Jewish Social Studies* 11:2 (2005): 1–18.
- 46 For an excellent overview of Wissenschaft des Judentums, see Norman Stillman, “Academic Study of Islamicate Jewry,” in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, ed. Norman A. Stillman (Brill Online, 2015). <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-jews-in-the-islamic-world/academic-study-of-islamicate-jewry-COM_0002050> (Accessed: August 2015). Also see his forthcoming contribution, “The Academic Study of Islamicate Jewry” in *Muslim-Jewish Relations in Past and Present: A Kaleidoscopic View*, ed. Josef Meri (Leiden: Brill).
- 47 Words in brackets and parentheses added. María Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2002), pp. 32–33.
- 48 Norman Stillman, “Judaism and Islam: Fourteen Hundred Years of Intertwined Destiny? An Overview,” in *The Convergence of Judaism and Islam: Religious, Scientific and Cultural Dimensions*, ed. Michael Laskier and Yaacov Lev (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2011), p. 12.
- 49 See, for instance, Richard Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979); and N. Levtzion, “Conversion to Islam in Syria and Palestine and the Survival of Christian Communities,” in *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Michael Gervers and Ramzī Bikhazī (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1990), pp. 289–311.
- 50 Karen Barkey, “Studying the Ottoman Imperial Model,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society, The New Sociological Imagination II* 19 (2005): 15.
- 51 An excellent study of conversion to Islam in the Ottoman context, which includes a substantial discussion of Shabbatai Zevi and his followers, is Marc D. Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).
- 52 See Vera Moreen et al., “Iran/Persia,” in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World* (Brill Online, 2015). Reference. http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-jews-in-the-islamic-world/iranpersia-COM_0011520 (Accessed: 1 August 2015).
- 53 See, for instance, Jessica Marglin, “Jews in Sharī’a Courts: A Family Dispute from the Cairo Geniza,” in *Jews, Christians and Muslims in Medieval and Early Modern Times: Essays in Honor of Mark Cohen*, eds. Arnold Franklin, Roxani Margariti, Marina Rustow, and Uriel Simonsohn (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 207–225. See further Najwa Al-Qattan, “Dhimmīs in the Muslim court: legal autonomy and religious discrimination,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31 (1999), pp. 429–444. Also see Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 105–106.
- 54 Cohen, *Under Cross and Crescent*, p. 188.
- 55 The arguments are discussed in Josef Meri, *Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), chapters 3 and 4.
- 56 For a discussion of Jewish pilgrimage places, see Meri, *Cult of Saints*, pp. 214–250.
- 57 Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Travels*, trans. H. A. R. Gibb, 1:143.

Further reading

- Cohen, Mark, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008). Excellent study of Jewish-Muslim relations in medieval Islamdom and Christendom. Cohen demonstrates that Jews fared better under Islamic rule than under Christian rule in Europe.
- Cole, Peter, and Hoffinan, Adina, *Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Geniza* (New York: Schoecken, 2011). An excellent overview of the Geniza and its rediscovery during the nineteenth century.
- Constable, Olivia R. (ed.), *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997). Excellent collection of primary sources for the study of interfaith relations in medieval Iberia.
- Goitein, S. D., *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, 6 vols. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967–1993).

- Classic study of the Jewish communities of the medieval Islamic world based on a study of the Cairo Geniza. Sheds light on daily life.
- Lewis, Bernard, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984). Classic study of the history of the Jewish communities of the Middle East and North Africa. Unique for its formulation of the designation *Judaico-Islamic* to describe Muslim-Jewish symbiosis in different aspects of history.
- Meddeb, Abdelwahab, and Stora, Benjamin (eds.), *A History of Jewish-Muslim Relations: From the Origins to the Present Day*, trans. Jane Marie Todd and Michael Smith (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013). An international collaborative historical overview to Jewish-Muslim relations from early Islam to the present day. Useful for undergraduate courses.
- Menocal, María Rosa, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2002). Excellent and highly readable introduction to the history, culture, literature, and scientific achievements of Jews, Christians, and Muslims in medieval Al-Andalus.
- Meri, Josef (ed.), *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, 2 vols. (New York: Routledge, 2005). A comprehensive reference work on medieval Islamic civilization, including entries on Jewish and Christian personalities.
- Stillman, Norman, *Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Sourcebook* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979). Excellent resource for the study of Muslim-Jewish relations focusing on the Middle Ages; includes key texts in English translation.
- Stillman, Norman, *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, 5 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2010). Most comprehensive reference work on the history of the Jewish communities of the Islamic world and Middle East in the past and present. <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/encyclopedia-of-jews-in-the-islamic-world> (Accessed: 30 April 2016).

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