

Frankish Acre as an Arena of Inter-religious Conflicts and Exchanges

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Frankish Acre (1104-1291) was a city which housed, in addition to the Latin Christians who dominated it, various Eastern Christian groups as well as Jews, Samaritans and, at least during some of the period, Muslims as well. It was also a major port city frequented by Crusaders, pilgrims and merchants of various denominations. These circumstances raise issues such as the extent to which the city's public spaces witnessed cooperation, on the one hand, and conflict, on the other, between members of different religious groups? Were there any attempts to communicate concerning matters of belief and religious practice beyond confessional barriers? Can one speak of shared sites of worship in the city or, on the other hand, about the exclusion of certain religious groups from specific sites or sections of the city? How do these findings relate to the situation in the other Frankish capital, Jerusalem, characterized – as opposed to the rather commercial and secular Acre - first and foremost, by its sacred status? The paper will discuss these and similar questions in an attempt to sketch the inter-religious conflicts and exchanges which took place in the city and to contextualize them within the wider framework of the Latin East.