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Christians and Jews

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The term 'boundary' in reference to Jews is a complex one. Like Muslims, Jews were outside the Christian faith but, unlike the Muslims, they were present within Christian society. Like heretics, Jews were present in Christian society but, unlike them, they were not perceived as a part of the body of faith. These three groups represent three disparate types of boundaries, each determining a different attitude towards the group defined by the boundary. Yet, the Christian world did not view these groups as completely distinct from one another, and its attitude towards each carried over to its treatment of the other groups. In this way, the crusades, explicitly declared against the Muslims – the enemies of the church in foreign lands – influenced and aggravated the treatment of the enemies within Christian lands – the Jews. Similarly, the intensive campaign against heretical sects initiated in the thirteenth century led to the erection of sturdier barriers between Christians and Jews.

In addition, the Jew figures in the Christian world on two levels – one physical and the other theological – and the two are not fully congruent. The theological (or hermeneutical)¹ Jew is present in Christian imagination and thought; the Jew forms an integral part of the Christian worldview as an internal entity bearing unvarying characteristics, and this perception also dictates the attitude towards living Jews. Moreover, even when 'real' Jews are absent from Christian society, in spite of their absence they continue to function as an internal, imagined 'other'. The concept of boundary and that of the imagined Jew are both keys for deciphering the code of the relations between Christians and Jews in the Middle Ages, particularly in the thirteenth century.

¹ Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1999), 1–21.

Whereas in the early Middle Ages the Islamic lands were home to the majority of Jews as well as the seat of the chief Jewish cultural creation, with the advent of the second millennium, the Jews underwent a process of 'Europeanisation'. The Jewish pronouncement '[better] under Edom than under Ishmael' is voiced repeatedly in a variety of Jewish sources, indicating that Jews preferred to live among Christians than among Muslims.² Records normally dwell on descriptions of calamities, adversity and deviations from normalcy, silently passing over routine days of peace and quiet. In spite of this, the sources enable us to infer that by the early thirteenth century Jews were integrated in their environment, their communities flourished, and relations with Christians were by and large neighbourly. For the most part, Jews were practically indistinguishable from Christians in their dress, language and even customs, with the exception of their religious practices. Jews lived mainly in cities, made their living in commerce and financial ventures, and greatly benefited from Europe's increasing urbanisation. It is customary to distinguish between the large concentration of Jewish communities in Germany (including northern France and England) and the Jewish centre in post-Reconquista Spain (including southern France), and a third and separate community in Italy.³

As a rule, Jews were the only minority whose existence was permitted in Christian society. Jews lived throughout the Christian West in a state of relative tolerance inspired both by a fundamental Christian theological precept (as formulated by St Augustine) and the understandable desire of the authorities to maintain law and order. This state of tolerance and stability was disrupted by sporadic outbreaks of intolerance, which in extreme cases took the form of violent attacks, in a sort of perpetual pendulum that increasingly swung towards intolerance. The need to mark boundaries became pressing

2 Bernard Septimus, "Better under Edom than under Ishmael": The History of a Saying', *Zion* 47 (1982), 103-11 (in Hebrew).

3 Salo Wittmayer Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 2nd edn (18 vols.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1952-83), vols. 10, 11; Guido Kisch, *The Jews in Medieval Germany: A Study in their Legal and Social Status* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949); Michael Toch, *Die Juden im mittelalterlichen Reich* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1998); Robert Chazan, *Medieval Jewry in Northern France: A Political and Social History* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); Yitzhak Fritz Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, trans. Louis Schoffman (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971); Attilio Milano, *Storia degli Ebrei in Italia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1963).

The different communities are distinguished from one another in a variety of aspects. Up until the fourteenth century, the Spanish world was characterized by 'convivencia': a co-existence of Jews, Christians and Muslims in relative harmony and with utmost tolerance, which included cultural openness, a range of economic occupations and inclusion in positions of government, all phenomena unknown in the German world.

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specifically in view of the physical, social and cultural proximity between the two groups. The more the concept of the solidarity of the Christian world took hold, the worse the treatment of the Jews grew. The pressing need to delineate clear boundaries, indicating who is in and who is out, and to prevent any possible contact between the groups is the primary feature of thirteenth-century Christian legislation and measures regarding Jews. Whereas the marking of boundaries was an essential need for both parties – Christians and Jews alike – and was intended to preserve the individual identity of each, as of the twelfth century, and to a greater extent as of the thirteenth, it was often attended by restrictions imposed on Jews in various areas of life, as a prime expression of the transformation of Christianity into a ‘persecuting society’.⁴ This process culminated in the absolute expulsion of Jews from the lands in which they dwelt. Hence, whereas in the early thirteenth century Jews lived throughout Europe, by the end of the Middle Ages (1500), Jews were to be found in Western Europe only in Italy and in a few regions of the German Reich.

Medieval ecclesiastical legislation upheld the rights of Jews to protection and to an existence with a modicum of honour in the Christian world, and several popes issued protective bulls.⁵ The theological justification for having Jews remain in the Christian world and for granting them protection is to be found in the verse ‘Slay them not, lest at any time they forget your law; scatter them in your might’ (Septuagint version of Ps. 59.12). In other words, Jews are the guarantee that Christians will not forget their own faith, which is to be found in Jewish Scripture. Yet the Jews’ existence may be tolerated only so long as their servile and inferior status is maintained. This is the basis for their protection, but likewise serves as the grounds for imposing restrictions on them.

The most fundamental and well-known document in this matter is the *Sicut Iudaeis* bull (*Constitutio pro Iudaeis*). The bull was first promulgated in 1120 by Pope Calixtus II and later re-issued by several different popes.⁶ It reaffirms the theological principle of the doctrine of Jewish Witness as the basis for

⁴ Robert I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

⁵ Amnon Linder, *The Jews in the Legal Sources of the Early Middle Ages* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997); Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century* (Philadelphia: Dropsie College, 1933); Shlomo Simonsohn, ed., *The Apostolic See and the Jews*, vol. 1, *Documents: 492–1464* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1988).

⁶ Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, 92–5; Solomon Grayzel, ‘The Papal Bull *Sicut Iudaeis*’, in Meir Ben-Horin et al., eds., *Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Newman* (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 243–80.

extending protection to the Jews and for the prohibition against abusing them or their rights, despite their obstinacy and refusal to recognise the truth. They must not be forcibly converted, but anyone who has converted to Christianity may not renege and resume being a Jew. Naturally, all of the above is applicable only providing that they do not plot against Christians and Christianity.

An important milestone in the attitude of the church towards the Jews was the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), convened in the Lateran Palace in Rome by Pope Innocent III. The Council addressed the burning issues of the day in the Christian world: the status of the church, the doctrine of transubstantiation, the spread of the Cathar heresy, and the attempts to renew the crusades. The main aim of the Council was to bolster the unity and uniformity in the Christian world and to delineate more sharply the boundaries of Christian society. It is in this broader context of the conciliar legislation (seventy decrees in all), that the four clauses pertaining to Jews should be understood.⁷ These four clauses determined ecclesiastical policy and were to have a great impact on the lives of the Jews in Europe: they imposed restrictions on the rate of interest that Jews may charge, barred them from positions of authority over Christians, prohibited the observance of Jewish customs by voluntarily baptised Jews, and attempted to minimise contact between Jews and Christians by distinguishing Jews by their garb. The common features of these decisions are their focus on contacts between Jews and Christians and their aim to limit the interaction between the two groups as much as possible.

The decree on dress is the best-known among the Council's decisions with regard to the Jews. Immediately after the Council, Innocent III wrote to the archbishops and bishops of France, demanding that they enforce the dress code, provided it does not endanger the lives of the Jews. The pope thus validated both facets of the policy of the Christian church: the Jews must be sustained and safeguarded, but at the same time they must be kept as separate as possible from Christians. The repeated petitions to enforce the decree indicate that it was neither immediately nor universally implemented. Nonetheless, the Jewish badge – the identifying mark that all Jews were required to affix to their clothes whenever they went out in public – was a direct outcome of this decree, and the duty to wear it remained in force for many centuries.⁸

⁷ Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, 306–13.

⁸ Guido Kisch, 'The Yellow Badge in History', *Historia Judaica* 19 (1957), 89–146; Alfred Rubens, *A History of Jewish Costume* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973).

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A further means of keeping Christians and Jews apart from one another was by setting Jews apart in specially designated quarters. From the outset Jews, as any minority would, tended to reside together in their own neighbourhoods or streets. In the early Middle Ages, when rulers were desirous of Jews settling in the city, Jewish neighbourhoods were established in the better areas, in proximity to the centre of town, the market or the river. This was the case in the cities of Ashkenaz, and also in post-Reconquista Spain. The central location of the Jewish neighbourhood had economic, social and cultural implications. Because medieval cities were small, the synagogue was close to the cathedral or another church, and the two groups – Christians and Jews – were in constant contact. These Jewish neighbourhoods did not have a closed or exclusive character. There were cities which did not have specifically Jewish neighbourhoods, and others in which Jews lived intermingled with Christians. As of the thirteenth century, and even more so in the fourteenth, as part of the attempts to restrict contact between Jews and Christians, the demand began to be voiced that Jews live in separate areas.⁹ The process of re-settling Jews in completely separate neighbourhoods, sometimes established in remote and unhygienic locations, gained momentum only in the late Middle Ages, and culminated in the establishment of ghettos, a phenomenon originating in sixteenth-century Italy which played a crucial role in the marginalisation of Jews.

The founding of separate and closed Jewish neighbourhoods was a type of internal expulsion. A more drastic solution was the absolute expulsion of Jews from Christian lands. Although the reasons for expulsion varied and were usually made up of a jumble of religious, economic and political motives, they undoubtedly express the most extreme aspect of Christian–Jewish relations in Europe, more specifically the Christian trend to completely eradicate these relations. Yet many of the expelled Jews remained within the realms of Christian Catholicism, mainly in Italy and Poland.

From the very advent of Christianity, Christians articulated the differences between them and the Jews in written works which were to become a sizeable genre called, as were many of its compositions, *Adversus Iudaeos* or *Contra Iudaeos*.¹⁰ From the second to the sixteenth century some 240 Christian pieces

9 Alfred Haverkamp, 'The Jewish Quarters in German Towns during the Late Middle Ages', in R. Po-Chia Hsia and Hartmut Lehmann, eds., *In and Out of the Ghetto: Jewish–Gentile Relations in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 237–53.

10 Heinz Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte* (3 vols.; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1982, 1988, 1994); Samuel Krauss and William Horbury, *The Jewish–Christian*

were composed in this genre, a number which indicates the importance of the topic to Christianity. Many of these works were written by renowned thinkers. A parallel genre developed in the Jewish world, beginning in the ninth century, but more impressively from the twelfth century. Known as 'Victory/*Nizzahon* Literature', dozens of works were written in this genre. It may be viewed as a mirror of the Christian compositions and as an expression of the theological pressure exerted by Christianity.¹¹ Yet, the polemic with Judaism is not limited to a particular literary genre and is present in nearly every type of work written in the Middle Ages: homilies by clergy, epistles, historical chronicles, poetry, religious drama and above all in commentaries on the Scriptures. Visual art also served as a patently polemical tool.

In the twelfth century the *Contra Iudaeos* genre began to flourish, not only as part of the overall cultural resurgence, but also as a bold expression of the church's vision of a *societas Christiana*. The polemic with Judaism underwent an intensification and systemisation that ought to be regarded as part of the intellectual and missionary trends of the time. Despite the presentation of these polemical works as having been written with a view to persuading the opponent, they are not written in the language of the opponent (the Christian works are written in Latin and the Jewish ones in Hebrew), and many of them are worded aggressively and sometimes even venomously, a doubtful method of engendering trust and understanding. Thus they should be regarded as an internal instrument of persuasion – a means for internally confronting the problem posed by the sister religion – in order to reinforce the faith of the believers.

Up until the thirteenth century, the polemical literature centred mostly on Scripture and its exegesis, seeming to take the form of an internal family debate over the correct understanding of a common text, its stories, protagonists and prophecies. The Christian reading which gave the text a prefigurative and allegorical significance compelled the Jews to insist on a historical reading that adhered to the literal meaning of the verses. However, an openness to the reading and exegesis of the other side may be found on both sides. There were even some Christian scholars like Hugh of St-Victor (d. 1142) and

Controversy: From the Earliest Times to 1789 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1995); A. Lukin Williams, *Adversus Iudaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae until the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935).

¹¹ David Berger, ed., *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages: A Critical Edition of the Nizzahon Vetus* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979); Robert Chazan, *Daggers of Faith: Thirteenth-Century Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1989).

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Andrew of St-Victor (d. 1175) who considered the Jewish exegesis superior expressly because of its adherence to the Hebrew source, the *Hebraica veritas*.¹²

The debate on Scripture lasted throughout the Middle Ages and into the modern period. However, in the thirteenth century the polemic underwent radical changes as part of the intensive Christian missionary attack against anyone outside the boundaries of its faith, including the Jews. The new missionary and polemical attack was planned and managed largely by the recently founded mendicant orders. The friars acted as missionaries, polemicists, itinerant preachers, university scholars and inquisitors, all functions aimed at defending the fortifications of faith and sharply defining its boundaries.¹³

One innovation that the Dominicans instituted was bringing the Talmud into the heart of the debate between the two religions. Even before the birth of the mendicant orders, as early as the twelfth century, Peter the Venerable, the abbot of Cluny, in his book *Adversus Judeorum inveteratam duritiem* (1144), had argued that the present-day Jews are not the same as the Jews of the past, and that therefore the church need not tolerate them.¹⁴ Peter the Venerable drew his portrait of the present-day Jews from the *Dialogi* of Petrus Alphonsi (1108 or 1110), a work that employed talmudic legends to prove the folly of Jewish beliefs.¹⁵ Unlike the Bible, the Talmud was unfamiliar to Christians and had not been translated into their languages. It was an internal Jewish text, and thus far there had hardly been any Christian interference in internal Jewish affairs. The thirteenth-century mendicant mission made the Talmud a central topic for attack, arguing that the Jews do not live according to the Bible, but rather according to the Talmud. They are not the Jews who appear in the stories of the New Testament, but rather 'Talmudic Jews'.¹⁶ At the vanguard of this offensive were Jews who had converted to Christianity. They especially

12 See among others: Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952); Michael A. Signer, 'God's Love for Israel: Apologetic and Hermeneutical Strategies in Twelfth-Century Biblical Exegesis', in Michael A. Signer and John Van Engen, eds., *Jews and Christians in Twelfth Century Europe* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 123–49.

13 Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, N.Y. and London: Cornell University Press, 1982); Steven J. McMichael and Susan E. Myers, eds., *Friars and Jews in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

14 Peter the Venerable, *Adversus Judeorum inveteratam duritiem*, ed. Yvonne Friedman (CCCM 58; Turnhout: Brepols, 1985).

15 Petrus Alphonsi, *Dialogus Petri cognomento Alphonsi, ex Judaeo Christiani et Moysi Judaei*, PL 157, cols. 535–672.

16 Alexander Patschovsky, 'Der "Talmudjude": Vom mittelalterlichen Ursprung eines neuzeitlichen Themas', in Alfred Haverkamp and Franz-Josef Ziwes, eds., *Juden in der christlichen Umwelt während des späten Mittelalters* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot 1992), 13–27.

had access to the talmudic texts, and their attack was multi-faceted. One contention against the Talmud was that it is filled with heresy and blasphemy. This was the argument that Nicolas Donin tried to prove in the Disputation of Paris (1240); the argument was accepted to be true and led to the burning of twenty-four cartloads of volumes of the Talmud in France in 1242.¹⁷ Another argument was that the talmudic sages knew Jesus and recognised the veracity of his gospel, and that proof of this is embedded in talmudic legends. That was the strategy that led the architects of the Disputation of Barcelona (1263) and was also the basis for the large-scale work by Ramon Martí (Raimundus Martini), *Pugio fidei* (1278).¹⁸

The perception of the Talmud as being heretical literature according to which Jews live their lives caused a further deterioration in the image of the Jew in Christian eyes and heralded the end of Jewish cultural autonomy. It may also be seen to contain the seeds of Christian censorship, which would develop and flourish in later periods. In Paris, the Christians implemented against the Jews an inquisitorial system that was intended for the battle against heresy within Christianity. As in the trials of the Inquisition, the prosecution, the testimonies, the proof and the conclusions were in the hands of the clerics, whereas the execution of the verdict was left to the secular authorities.

The religious polemic was not merely a literary phenomenon. The cultural and physical proximity between the two groups made for a persistent and animated dialogue, expressing the vitality of their religious world. Naturally, any spontaneous, chance and popular encounters among minor ecclesiastics or even among laymen hardly left a trace. Information about them may be gleaned indirectly from ecclesiastical rulings forbidding disputations by laymen,¹⁹ and from a few of atypical works, such as the Disputation of Majorca (1286), which presents disputations among lay merchants in the thirteenth century.²⁰

One thirteenth-century innovation was the formalisation of disputations as public affairs, planned and orchestrated by mendicant friars as a kind of show

17 Ch. Merchavia, *The Church versus Talmudic and Midrashic Literature (500–1248)* (Jerusalem: The Bialik Institute, 1970) (in Hebrew); Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 60–76.

18 Raimundus Martini, *Pugio fidei adversus Mauros et Judaeos* (Leipzig, 1687, repr. Farnborough: Gregg, 1967).

19 Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, 300–1, 318–19, 324–5; Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century*, vol. 2, ed. Kenneth R. Stow (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 39, 67, 68.

20 Ora Limor, ed., *Die Disputationen zu Ceuta (1179) und Mallorca (1286): Zwei antijüdische Schriften aus dem mittelalterlichen Genua* (MGH, Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 15; Munich Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1994).

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trial aimed at proving the Christian truth. Among these public disputations were the Disputation of Paris in 1240, the Disputation of Barcelona in 1263 and the Second Disputation of Paris in 1269.²¹ These disputations all involved Jews who had converted to Christianity, and all discussed the Talmud in addition to presenting biblical evidence. The most elaborate one was the Disputation of Barcelona, held over the course of four days in July 1263 in Barcelona under the auspices of the king of Aragon. Its elaborateness and sophistication were a function not only of its agenda, but also of the interlocutors. On the Jewish side was Nahmanides, the greatest among the Spanish rabbis of his day, and on the Christian side was Pablo Christiani, a former Jew who became a Dominican friar, along with a battery of scholars from the mendicant orders, headed by the learned Dominican friar Raimundus of Peñaforte, formerly the Master General of the Dominicans. The agenda of the disputation clearly articulated the central topics of controversy between the two religions: has the messiah already come as the Christians believe, or is he yet to come as the Jews believe? Is the messiah God or is he truly human? And is it required to observe the commandments of the Law after the coming of the messiah?²² The Genoese merchant Inghetto Contardo, who disputed with Jews in Majorca in 1286, summed up the differences between Jews and Christians in a single sentence: 'there is no difference between us and you except regarding the Messiah, whom we say has already come, and you say is still to come.'²³ The theme of the messiah was a connecting thread which bids the discussion to other fundamental topics: the Deity (Is God one or is he three?); the virgin birth; and even the historical condition of the Jews, the continuing exile as proof of their error. That said, the first part of the merchant's remark deserves attention as well: that Jews and Christians are alike in all things, except with regard to the messiah. At the end of the thirteenth century such an assertion could still be made in the mixed cities of the Mediterranean, and it was precisely against assertions of this type that the mendicant friars and other representatives of the church wished to erect a barrier.

21 Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*; Chazan, *Daggers of Faith*; Hyam Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial: Jewish-Christian Disputations in the Middle Ages* (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1982); Joseph Shatzmiller, ed., *La deuxième controverse de Paris: Un chapitre dans la polémique entre chrétiens et juifs au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Collection de la REJ 15, 1994).

22 Robert Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond: The Disputation of 1263 and its Aftermath* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1992), 59.

23 'Quoniam inter nos et vos non est dissencio nisi de Messia, quem nos dicimus venisse et vos dicitis venire debet'. Limor, ed., *Die Disputationen*, 257.

The public disputations are an expression of the Christian missionary zeal of the thirteenth century, but the Jewish opponents were still treated in a respectful manner. Such at least was the case in Barcelona, where Nahmanides was granted freedom of speech and even took part in setting the agenda. Other missionary methods were sermons preached coercively in synagogues by Christian preachers, mainly mendicants, including Pablo Christiani and Ramon Lull.²⁴ Yet, it is noteworthy that the new interest in the Jews and their culture also engendered a new type of Christian scholarship. The voluminous *Pugio fidei* by Ramon Martí was written ostensibly for missionary purposes, but at the same time it also represents a scholarly interest in Jewish literature, and as such it heralds the Christian Hebraism of the late Middle Ages. Despite the polemic's goal, it also has an aspect of exchange and dialogue as expressed also in the ongoing cultural interaction between Jews and Christians, the translations of works from one language to another and from one culture to another, and in the existence of a dialogue in biblical hermeneutics and in philosophy and science.

Whereas the public and written polemic was mainly aimed at learned Christians, its representations in visual art were universally understood and had a wider impact.²⁵ The artistic depiction of church and synagogue – *ecclesia* and *synagoga* – was prevalent in contemporary sculpture and painting, and expressed a state of simultaneous conflict and complement between the sister religions, whereby the images explain one another and the one cannot exist without the other.²⁶ In addition to this serene image, there were others that bore a more negative message, such as the image of Cain or Judas Iscariot – the traitorous, avaricious arch-villain who, as his name implies, personifies 'The Jew.' Similarly, exempla that preachers used in church homilies, such as the legend of Judas Iscariot told in *The Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragina, painted present-day Jews in extremely negative colours based on traditional attributes of the alleged Jews of the past.²⁷

24 Jocelyn N. Hillgarth, *Ramon Lull and Lullism in Fourteenth Century France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Harvey J. Hames, *The Art of Conversion: Christianity and Kabbalah in the Thirteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

25 Heinz Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art: An Illuminated History* (New York: Continuum, 1996); Ruth Mellinkoff, *Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages* (2 vols.; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981); Sara Lipton, *Images of Intolerance: The Representation of Jews and Judaism in the Bibles moralisées* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

26 Wolfgang S. Seiferth, *Synagogue and Church in the Middle Ages: Two Symbols in Art and Literature*, trans. Lee Chadeayne and Paul Gottwald (New York: Ungar, 1970).

27 Ruth Mellinkoff, *The Mark of Cain* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1981); Peter Dinzelbacher, *Judastraditionen*, (Vienna: Selbstverlag des österreichischen Museums für Volkskunde, 1977); Hyam Maccoby, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil* (London: Peter Halban, 1992).

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The complex figure of the Jew as a historical and theological being had an eschatological aspect as well. According to deep-rooted Christian belief, the Jews had in fact refused to see the light, but at the end of days they would acknowledge the Christian truth, and their dramatic conversion to Christianity would presage the coming of the kingdom of heaven on earth. The upsurge in messianic tension in the thirteenth century and the expectation of the impending *parousia*, particularly among mendicant circles that were influenced by the teachings of Joachim of Fiore (c. 1135–1202), made the conversion of the Jews to Christianity a pressing matter, and the vigorous mission conducted against them should be understood also in this context.²⁸

In the Middle Ages conversion generally operates in a single direction – from Judaism to Christianity – and traditionally the church continued to oppose forced conversions. However, this unidirectional conversion did not cure the deep-rooted Christian fear of Christians being converted to Judaism. Pope Clement IV, in his bull *Turbato corde* (1267), ordered the Dominicans and the Franciscans to investigate reports of Jewish attempts to convert Christians, an order reiterated by subsequent popes.²⁹ The newly formed Inquisition took steps to prevent Jews from influencing former Jews, now converts to Christianity. Sexual relations between Jews and Christians were considered heresy, and any who took part in them were condemned to burning at the stake. It is reasonable to assume that, like the polemic tracts, the aim of the public disputations was mostly that of internal propaganda, as a means of strengthening believers in their faith. Things would be different at the public Disputation of Tortosa (1413–14) which was conceived as a weapon for converting Jews to Christianity, and indeed in the course of it hundreds of Jews did convert, an expression of weakness and a sense of persecution uncharacteristic of thirteenth-century Judaism.³⁰

The growing of an urban mercantile class led – especially in northern Europe – to the Jews gradually being driven out of commercial trade, and many Jews turned to money-lending, an occupation necessary in economic terms, but despicable in both theological and social terms. Over time this occupation became the distinguishing mark of Jews. Money-lending strengthened the

28 Richard Kenneth Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981); Robert Lerner, *The Feast of Saint Abraham: Medieval Millenarians and the Jews* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

29 Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, vol. 2, 102–4, 122–3, 147, 171–2, 181.

30 Baer, *A History of the Jews*, vol. 2, pp. 170–243.

association between Jews and the sovereigns who needed financial credit, levied high taxes on the earnings of the Jews, and in return provided them with protection.³¹ This dependence on the authorities further weakened the status of the Jews and in several cases led to their expulsion from the kingdom once their usefulness had been exhausted.³² Their despised occupation along with direct ties to the authorities tarred Jews with the colours of sin and exploitation and further augmented the animosity towards them. In addition, the urbanisation, the increased activity in trade and finances in Christian society and the widened gap between rich and poor caused the Christians to lay their sense of guilt at the doorstep of the Jews, thereby turning the Jews into Christian society's scapegoats.³³ Usurious money-lending was added to the satanical image of the Jews as persecutors of Christians and Christ-killers. As of the twelfth century and particularly in the thirteenth century, the image of the Jew grew even more negative, and his satanical aspect became more sharply defined. If up until this point the Jews had been conceived of as blind and therefore acting unknowingly, they now came to be viewed as maliciously evil, with a deeply rooted demonical, perverted and traitorous character.³⁴ Radical expressions of the demonical image of the Jew were the accusations of ritual murder, ritual cannibalism (the blood libels) and the desecration of the Host, and were frequently followed by violent attacks against the Jews.

The first recorded instance of Jews being accused of the ritual murder of Christians (usually, of Christian children) is in the mid-twelfth century

- ³¹ The appellation 'servi camerae' first appears in the twelfth century, and would remain common throughout the Middle Ages. This terminology, which was meant to protect the Jews, ultimately added to their humiliation. Kisch, *The Jews in Medieval Germany*, 143–5; David Abulafia, 'The King and the Jews – the Jew in the Ruler's Service', in Christoph Cluse, ed., *The Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages (Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 43–54.
- ³² Robert Stacey, 'Thirteenth-Century Anglo-Jewry and the Problem of the Expulsion', in Yosef Kaplan and David S. Katz, eds., *Exile and Return: Anglo-Jewry through the Ages* (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1993) (in Hebrew); William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews: From Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989); Markus J. Wenninger, *Man bedarf keiner Juden mehr: Ursachen und Hintergründe ihrer Vertreibung aus den deutschen Reichsstädten im 15. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: H. Bohlhaus Nachf., 1981).
- ³³ Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press 1978).
- ³⁴ Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943); Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Jeremy Cohen, 'The Jews as the Killers of Christ in the Latin Tradition: From Augustine to the Friars', *Traditio* 39 (1983), 1–27.

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(Norwich, 1144).³⁵ From that time until the expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290, at least fourteen libels are known in England, including the blood libel in Lincoln in 1255, demonstrating the ease with which this idea took root in Christian soil. In the second half of the twelfth century libels appeared on the Continent as well, including the Libel of Blois (1171), which terminated in the burning at the stake of some forty Jews, even though no body of a missing Christian was found.³⁶ In Fulda, in 1235, the libel of ritual murder was enhanced by a further accusation: the use of Christian blood for ritual purposes, usually for the purpose of baking *matzot*, the unleavened bread of Passover.³⁷ This elaborated version of the blood libel is undoubtedly the darkest juncture in Christian–Jewish relations in the Middle Ages. The libel garnered believers throughout Christendom, first in northern Europe and later in the Iberian peninsula as well. To be sure, not all Christians believed that Jews murdered Christian children for ritual purposes and used their blood. Kings, popes and Christian scholars spoke vociferously and consistently against the libel and even tried to expose its spuriousness, but did not manage to uproot the belief in it or halt its proliferation.³⁸

In addition to the blood libel, the Libel of the Host appeared in the late thirteenth century (Paris, 1290). Its premise was the belief that Jews deceitfully obtained the Host and then abused and desecrated it.³⁹ The famous libels concluded in miracles effected by the Host, and thus the Jews ended by validating the Christian faith against their will. Both libels, that of the ritual murder and that of the Host, replicate the original and eternal sin of the Jews – the sin of the crucifixion of Jesus. According to the logic of the libels, the Jews murdered Jesus, even while knowing that he was the messiah, and they repeatedly murder his body (the Host) and his believers because their faith commands them to do so. Today, at least 180 blood libels are known to have

35 Gavin I. Langmuir, 'Thomas of Monmouth: Detector of Ritual Murder', *Speculum* 59 (1984), 820–46; Gavin I. Langmuir, 'Historiographic Crucifixion', in David R. Blumenthal, ed., *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times* (Brown Judaica Studies 54; Chico, Cal.: Scholars Press, 1984), 1–26.

36 Robert Chazan, 'The Blois Incident of 1171: A Study in Jewish Intercommunal Organization', *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research* 36 (1968), 13–32.

37 Bernhard Diestelkamp, 'Der Vorwurf des Ritualmordes gegen Juden vor dem Hofgericht Kaiser Friedrichs II. im Jahr 1236', in Dieter Simon, ed., *Religiöse Devianz* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1990), 19–39.

38 Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, index: Ritual Murder; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, vol. 2, index: Ritual Murder.

39 Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

been levelled against Jews, as well as approximately 100 Host libels, many of which led to the loss of Jewish lives.⁴⁰

Many explanations have been rendered for the appearance of the libels. Some seek their sources in the Jewish world – in Jewish customs or beliefs that were misconstrued by Christians; others seek them in the Christian world and link them, among other things, to the formulation of the doctrine of transubstantiation and the anxiety aroused by doubts about it.⁴¹ Later these accusations would be joined by others, such as the poisoning of wells (e.g., during the Black Death) or the use of black magic to destroy Christianity. The willingness of the Christian public to accept the accusations against the Jews and their writings is a manifestation of the atmosphere of the time and the nature of Christian devotion which strongly emphasised Jesus' suffering as a man and the worship of his mother, the Virgin Mary.⁴² The accusations against the Jews reflect a basic Christian anxiety and an intensification of the irrational element in Christian consciousness. The libels also point to the fact that, although Jews had been a minority for centuries in Christian society, and at times even a persecuted minority, Christian imagination preserved in all its original vitality the original trauma at the basis of Christian faith, the trauma of the crucifixion. In the Christian imagination the Jews were still the persecutors, and the Christians the persecuted. In terms of the Jews, the myriad accusations created impenetrable boundaries between the two religions, and their destructive influence is apparent in the late Middle Ages and into the modern period.

⁴⁰ Will-Erich Peuckert, 'Ritualmord', in *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1931), vol. 7, cols. 727–739.

⁴¹ Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006); Rubin, *Gentile Tales*.

⁴² William Chester Jordan, 'Marian Devotion and the Talmud Trial of 1240', in Bernard Lewis and Friedrich Niewöhner, eds., *Religiongespräche im Mittelalter* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), 61–76.