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**Mutual Othering:
Perceptions of Jews, Muslims and Christians c.1100-1250**

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Abstract:

Scholarship on Jews, Muslims and Christians in the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries is extensive. So too is the application of theories regarding the Other to explain relations between them. Yet the othering of different groups that occurred is mostly discussed as though it were a one-way process. Relations between the peoples of monotheistic faiths are often presented in terms of dichotomies. Edward Said's *Orientalism* has been especially influential in creating these viewpoints. Yet critics argue that Said's work neglected the complex reality of alterity, a neglect which can even lead to the very faults of essentialism and generalizing tendencies that it denounces. This thesis builds on arguments, such as those of Homi Bhabha, that othering was not a practice limited to one group and did not flow only from 'West' to 'East. It explores the many stereotypes that were generated by three groups about the Other in order to establish a sense of difference and Self. It also examines the similarities in othering strategies employed by Jewish, Muslim and Christian writers, which exemplify a two-way flow in the process of othering. This approach is taken to offer a broader and more holistic and nuanced understanding of the mutual nature of othering in the medieval period.

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Introduction

“Human nature is such that each man, whatever his land, loves his own people more than strangers”¹

‘Enemies of God’ was a label shared by Christians, Muslims and Jews in the Medieval period. This research will explore the views of these three faiths towards one another from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries. In particular it will examine the complex influences and techniques each of them used to represent and differentiate themselves from each other in certain key texts. It will discuss these representations using modern ideas of othering and to an extent the post-colonial theories of Edward Said and Homi Bhabha. Examining the way that the three faiths saw the Other² will reveal how these groups inadvertently shaped each other’s identities. This work will explore the othering of multiple groups towards each other, and the common depictions of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim Other made by medieval writers in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The forms the medieval Other took amongst these three groups during a period of intense interactions between them were complex. Analysing these complexities is useful in understanding the general mind-sets that were present, and their influence in fostering animosity and violence such as the events of the Crusades. These animosities also shaped attitudes into the present. Examining how these three groups perceived each other during this formative period in the past also helps an understanding of current attitudes between Jews, Muslims and Christians. There has been extensive literature on divisions between two peoples, such as how Christians and Muslims viewed each other, but much less on three-way viewpoints, which include all three perspectives from Jews, Christians and Muslims. These viewpoints have still to be fully analysed using the concept of the Other.

¹ “Cosmas of Prague” in Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (Princeton University Press, 1993), 221.

² Subsequent usage of the ‘Other’ will consist of capitals only.

Orientalism and Othering: Literature review

Otherness is an established concept to refer to exclusionary practices adopted in all human societies long before the concept was coined.³ Yasuaki Onuma describes it as classifiable in multiple ways, the most prevalent form in medieval texts being “negative otherness.”⁴ In their foundational work, Goetz and Wood have applied the study of otherness to the medieval context. It attempts to unpack the concept of Otherness specifically in the medieval context. They stress the flexibility of the term and how it can take various forms such as political (in the case of a foreigner, or migrant), ethnic (a different people), social (a minority, a different rank or class), religious (someone of a different faith, including heretics) and cultural (speaking a different language or belonging to a different culture).⁵

Otherness can be based upon a selection or a single characteristic as the appropriate standard or measure and can depend on stereotypes. Yet Goetz and Wood state that different iterations of Otherness were simultaneously possible because the Other was such a flexible notion. A person could view a specific individual as Other based on ethnicity, but not as Other if applying the filter of religion or gender. Otherness could also be a mutual perception: whoever regards others as the Other will themselves likewise be regarded by those Others as the Other.⁶ This makes the potential for Others to be found everywhere: outside one’s own community as well as within.⁷ The mutual and fluid nature of such othering suggested by this analysis is emphasized in this study.

Goetz and Wood also examined some of the dangers of applying Otherness to the Middle Ages. These include oversimplification, where all unfavourable associations are incorporated into one single model of alterity which would ignore distinctions between groups. The treatment of

³ Nazan Yıldız, "The Other, Otherness and Othering in the Middle Ages," in *The Encyclopedia of the Global Middle Ages* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 2.

⁴ Yasuaki Onuma, "Otherness as an Ideal," in *International Law in a Transcivilizational World* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), 319-20.

⁵ Hans-Werner Goetz, and Ian N. Wood, eds., *‘Otherness’ in the Middle Ages* (Brepols, 2021), 20.

⁶ Goetz and Wood, *‘Otherness’ in the Middle Ages*, 26.

⁷ Goetz and Wood, *‘Otherness’ in the Middle Ages*, 12.

Others as a stable subject without accounting for differences over time is also a noteworthy problem.⁸ This is a point also made by Heng, who notes how “differences selected for essentialism will vary in the long term”.⁹

The most impactful work using a concept of the Other, with particular relevance for this study, has been Edward Said’s *Orientalism*. It famously highlighted the distorted way the East was represented by the West in past scholarship, art and literature. Said drew attention to the ‘fictions’ that occurred in Western representations of the East which ‘crowd the unfamiliar space’ outside the Self and forged ideas towards certain groups.¹⁰ He argued that Western narratives were often laced with stereotypical representations of people and that these representations carried with them implications of superiority and inferiority.¹¹ His work also emphasized the contrasts which were created through the process of othering.¹² Said used the term Other to refer to a distinction created in the mind towards someone or a group that was different, potentially threatening and usually contrasted with what was familiar. The differences perceived that helped to formulate the Other could be real or imagined.¹³ Othering was a way of thinking towards a specific group, where fictitious thought assisted in creating a sense of identity. This thinking was often negative, in that it created binaries that opposed a positive and a negative connoted term, creating mental boundaries in the form of ‘us’ and ‘them’, which stigmatized the other group and generalized its members as Others.¹⁴ Said explained that this distinction did not require it to be affirmed by the group being labelled the Other: “it is enough for ‘us’ to set up these boundaries in our own minds”.¹⁵

Though influential, Said’s *Orientalism* has undergone significant criticisms. Nizzar Hermes notes its stark neglect of the Orient’s own tradition of alterity. Absent from Said’s discussion are

⁸ Goetz and Wood, ‘Otherness’ in the Middle Ages, 19.

⁹ Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 27.

¹⁰ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Penguin, 2003), 54-6; Valerie Kennedy, *Edward Said: A Critical Introduction* (Polity Press, 2000), 22-3.

¹¹ Robert Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and its Discontents* (The Overlook Press, 2006), 3.

¹² Said, *Orientalism*, 54; Jean-François Staszak “Other/otherness,” in *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography: A 12-Volume Set*, ed. R. Kitchin and N. Thrift (Elsevier Science, 2009), 2.

¹³ Said, *Orientalism*, 54; Staszak, “Other/otherness”, 2.

¹⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, 54; Staszak, “Other/otherness”, 3-5; Kennedy, *Edward Said: A Critical Introduction*, 23.

¹⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 54.

the Arabic/Islamic perceptions of the European/Christian Other.¹⁶ Said only looked at a one-way notion of othering, which does not account for the two-way nature of how the Other operated between multiple groups. As Hermes states “Orientals did not exist solely to be gazed at”.¹⁷ Goetz and Wood also touch on this concept where they identified that “‘Otherness’ can be regarded from both sides of the social strata”.¹⁸ Aman Nadhiri observes how the Other was a concept that could be used by both medieval Christians and Muslims.¹⁹

Moreover, Phillips and Schaller argue that Said’s ideas neglected the importance of religious attitudes in determining medieval Christian interactions with Islam or Judaism.²⁰ Orientalist literature largely dismisses religious difference, whereas in contrast ‘medieval Orientalism’ is extremely concerned with religious difference, which in turn helped to shape racial ideas.²¹ According to Robert Bartlett, religions in the medieval period were not homogenous as we think of them in a modern sense. Religion usually meant membership to a community much more than adherence to a set of principles or beliefs, though this was not strictly so.²² Religion, in the medieval understanding of the term, did not necessarily deal with holistic entities but was ascribed to groups of people or individuals.²³ The general parameters laid out by Said will be expanded upon in this research.

It is in any case difficult to apply modern concepts to interpret viewpoints in the medieval period. Reading a modern concept like Orientalism into the past risks being ‘presentist’ – applying modern agendas and concerns when interpreting the past – and thus obscuring how

¹⁶ Nizar Hermes, *The [European] Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture: Ninth-Twelfth Century AD* (Springer, 2012), 5.

¹⁷ Hermes, *The [European] Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture*, xiii.

¹⁸ Goetz and Wood, ‘Otherness’ in the Middle Ages, 19.

¹⁹ Aman Y. Nadhiri, *Saracens and Franks in 12th - 15th Century European and Near Eastern Literature Perceptions of Self and the Other* (Routledge, 2016), 195.

²⁰ Kim Phillips, *Before Orientalism: Asian peoples and Cultures in European Travel Writing, 1245–1510* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 3; Henry Schaller, “Crusader Orientalism: Depictions of the Eastern Other in Medieval Crusade Writings” *Summer Research*, 327 (University of Puget Sound, 2018), 3-4.

²¹ Schaller, “Crusader Orientalism”, 4.

²² Robert Bartlett, “Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31, no. 1 (2001): 42.

²³ Nikolas Jaspert, “The Mediterranean Other and the Other Mediterranean. Perspectives of Alterity in Medieval Studies,” in ‘Otherness’ in the Middle Ages, ed. Goetz and Wood (Brepols, 2021), 42.

peoples might have understood differences between them in their own terms.²⁴ Heng draws attention to accusations of “presentism, anachronism and reification” when using modern terms to contribute to understandings concerning premodernity.²⁵ Ideas such as race, Schaller notes, are particularly at risk of presentism. The Other was not a term used by medieval people. However, the idea of difference, prejudice or fear that approximate the concept of the Other, has certainly been around throughout history. Nadhiri observes that otherness was the expression of a medieval thinker’s means of articulating an ethnocentric worldview.²⁶

A particularly problematic form of demarcating difference is the use of the term ‘race’. The dangers of presentism are here too. Bartlett, for example, distinguishes between medieval and modern definitions of the term.²⁷ However, Heng argues the term is one of the primary words we have “to demarcate human beings through differences”.²⁸ To avoid using a term like ‘race’ may be to bench a word that could in fact be deployed to reveal the agendas behind past actions and thought, allowing us “to bear witness to important strategic, epistemological, and political commitments not adequately served by the invocation of categories of greater generality (such as ‘otherness’ or ‘difference’)”.²⁹ Furthermore, to not use terms like ‘race’ would put historians in danger of reproducing “a certain kind of past”.³⁰ However, the application of new terms can be useful in their potential to renew perspective and to draw us away from associations, memories, and emotions attached to words such as race, gender, ethnicity, oriental, occident, class, and religion.

Not all historians have used the term Other to describe difference, but have contributed in effect to understandings of othering. Bartlett uses words such as “alterity” (which does mean ‘otherness’) but also "dualism", or "differentiating" to describe Europeans’ contact with the "strange or abhorrent".³¹ Interactions between Christians and Muslims, or between Celts and

²⁴ Schaller, “Crusader Orientalism,” 5.

²⁵ Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*, 8.

²⁶ Nadhiri, *Saracens and Franks*, 196.

²⁷ Bartlett, “Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity,” 39-56.

²⁸ Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*, 332.

²⁹ Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*, 8.

³⁰ Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*, 8.

³¹ Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (Princeton University Press, 1993), 313.

Franks, for example, generated distinctions based on ethnicity and language, rather than just religion. The label of ‘Christendom’, in the minds of medieval people, came to denote a specific geographic area in which dwelt an ethnic Christian people. Although no one was born ethnically Christian, their religious identity coincided with birth or life in particular lands.³² Creating ‘Christendom’ in Christian medieval minds also brought about its mirror-image ‘heathendom’. Those who saw themselves as living in Christendom “were conscious that the rest of the world was not Christendom”.³³ This distinction was used by medieval writers to comprehend territorial dichotomies and to contrast themselves with their defined opposites. Goetz and Wood write how medieval studies concerning the Other are saturated with religious dichotomies, and argues that otherness in medieval terms should not be limited to people of different creeds.³⁴ Furthermore, the Other did not solely exist on the peripheries of the world in faraway lands inhabited by barbarian people, but could also include internal groups nearby. Divisions could exist within more homogenous spaces and the Other can be familiar or unfamiliar and exist within one’s own society. This approach informs the discussion in this study of Christian relations with Jews.

The Other, especially outside a group’s geographical boundaries, is often described in negative terms, but not exclusively. Phillips’s critique of Said’s *Orientalism* in exploring travel writing from the high to the late medieval period, contests the argument that people in Asia were always viewed negatively by Western authors. Medieval travel writers, in Phillips’s view, lacked an ‘imperial eye’ or prescribed formula such as Orientalism to perceive the cultures of the East.³⁵ Travellers could regard the ‘wonders’ they encountered positively and look upon diversity as a curiosity. Travel writings may be unrepresentative of the opinions of all Christendom towards the unknown East, but Phillips notes how they contained a variety of medieval perspectives concerning foreignness and identity; there was little to no uniformity in their accounts. They varied according to the literary medium in which they were expressed and were further influenced by their chosen audiences. Different peoples were written about differently depending on whether they were seen as a curiosity or a potential threat. If they were a threat then accounts

³² Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 252-3.

³³ Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 253.

³⁴ Goetz and Wood, ‘Otherness’ in the Middle Ages, 14, 28.

³⁵ Phillips, *Before Orientalism*, 59.

tended to be negative.³⁶ For example, in the thirteenth century, the Mongols were portrayed as ferocious enemies.³⁷ Even so, there were stereotypes used in travel writings that influenced their descriptions of peoples: ancient prejudices such as those regarding the nomadic and non-urban as ‘barbarians’, and classifications such as accusing groups of being not ‘civilized’, were also notable forms of othering.³⁸ In order to protect any established superior identity, strategies were employed to delegitimize rivals such as different faiths. Erroneous beliefs were identified and given prescribed nomenclature, ‘pagan’ and ‘infidel’, much like ‘barbarian’ and ‘civilized’. These labels were used by early medieval authors to denote a particular defect towards certain peoples.³⁹ This is a point that this present research will continue to develop.

As other historians have shown, medieval writers could depict other groups as having a propensity for immoral behaviour and often used negative characteristics in order to portray their rivals as Others. For example, the practice of polygamy and other fleshly vices, such as sodomy, incest and adultery, were regarded as heretical and pagan to medieval authors and were attributed to their rivals.⁴⁰ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, who explored medieval depictions of Islam, explains how authors revelled in condemning practices that they as ‘Westerners’ had renounced ‘in order to be Westerners’.⁴¹ Through highlighting differences, readers could differentiate themselves from Others and establish superiority that ‘they’ were not as bad as ‘them’. The Other carried the burden of vices that the Self was without.⁴² This draws attention to what specific boundaries may look like and to the varied forms that demarcation takes in the practice of othering between different groups.

The Other has been observed to reveal concepts of the Self, as the Self is derived from a comparison of identity with an Other.⁴³ Phillips noted how the writings of medieval authors shaped cultural identities. For example, depicting peoples as practicing monstrous or deplorable acts, whether real or imagined, gave medieval authors a means to ‘police’ a boundary of identity,

³⁶ Phillips, *Before Orientalism*, 59-60.

³⁷ Phillips, *Before Orientalism*, 7.

³⁸ Phillips, *Before Orientalism*, 7, 99.

³⁹ Phillips, *Before Orientalism*, 60.

⁴⁰ Phillips, *Before Orientalism*, 143.

⁴¹ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, “On Saracen Enjoyment: Some Fantasies of Race in Late Medieval France and England,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 31 (2001): 125.

⁴² Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines* (University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 193.

⁴³ Goetz and Wood, *‘Otherness’ in the Middle Ages*, 24.

in order to establish how ‘we’ are not like ‘them’.⁴⁴ Said argued how the East has helped to define the European West by existing as a contrasting image.⁴⁵ Suzanne Conklin Akbari also argues that for medieval Christians, “defining Islam and the Orient was, for the most part, simply a way to indirectly define the self”.⁴⁶ How these faiths shaped each other may be seen in how rigidly they guarded their own identity against rival faiths. The three Abrahamic religions made efforts to maintain their distinctiveness. Common to all of them were rules that forbade mixing with ‘gentiles’, ‘infidels’ or ‘pagans’. The interaction between the different groups gives the impression that they reviled cross-cultural and cross-religious relations. Said, it can be argued, in his use of ‘East’ and ‘West’ dichotomies, is in a way carrying on the ancient tradition that was prevalent in the medieval period of distinguishing peoples based on geographical location. Notions such as the East being the opposite of the West existed in order to define the Self in clearer terms. These geographical locations were a means for the medieval thinker to define identity and make sense of differences in the world. Differences perceived by medieval people were primarily thought of as due to environmental influences caused by their location of origin, and hence physical appearance was minor compared to where someone was from.⁴⁷

This thesis takes much of this scholarship on othering as a starting point. Goetz and Wood note the ‘practical’ manifestations of otherness, such as behaviour towards Others, and correlations between anti-Jewish thinking that conditioned the medieval mind towards episodes of persecution of Jews like those during the Crusades or the Black Death.⁴⁸ As this thesis also emphasizes, negative thought patterns clearly existed before the Crusades and were likely even deeply embedded. However, the dichotomies such as Christian-Muslim, Jewish-Christian relations that tend to dominate discussion in medieval studies are nuanced here.⁴⁹ There is room for further research on how people in the Middle Ages thought about each other that goes beyond a general one-way othering. Norman Housley advocated for further research in understanding the

⁴⁴ Phillips, *Before Orientalism*, 93.

⁴⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 9-10.

⁴⁶ Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East, European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450* (Cornell University Press, 2009), 280.

⁴⁷ Schaller, “Crusader Orientalism”, 6-7.

⁴⁸ Goetz and Wood, ‘Otherness’ in the Middle Ages, 23.

⁴⁹ Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*, 8; Goetz and Wood, ‘Otherness’ in the Middle Ages, 14.

thought patterns that shaped medieval societies rather than focusing purely on the events of the past.⁵⁰

Goetz and Wood suggest a need for further research into the concept of otherness by studying the variety and interactions of people's perceptions of each other during the medieval period.⁵¹ It is often insufficient simply to identify Others; the indicators, criteria and reasons for demarcation have also to be examined.⁵² For example, were Jews persecuted for their otherness? If so, was it for their religious, cultural or social otherness?⁵³ There is a further need to explore how medieval people othered and were in-turn othered.⁵⁴ Thus, this thesis will attempt to emphasize the two-way aspect of othering, and between more than two groups of people who inhabited the medieval world: Jews, Muslims and Christians. As much of the scholarship on othering suggests, there is a danger of turning these groups into single homogenous wholes which can obscure the nuances and variety of views that existed within them. It must be emphasized that the views of the selected sources may not reflect the entirety of views among the groups chosen, and that many of their viewpoints are unaccounted for or unknowable.

Crusades and religions

The viewpoints of all three groups were profoundly influenced from the eleventh century by the impact of the Crusades. The literature on this subject is vast, and some of this will be referenced in later chapters. There is also extensive literature on how Muslims and Christians viewed each other, although less on how Muslim, Christian and Jewish people viewed each other. Housley explored Christianity's pre-crusade view of Islam as a general threat to the Christian faith.⁵⁵ This was likely due to Muslim expansion into Spain which had a greater effect on the mind-set of the Franks who lived close by.⁵⁶ Norman Daniel discusses this sense of Islam as a threat to Christendom, which was expressed in polemical and fictitious writing about the East in order to

⁵⁰ Norman Housley, *Contesting the Crusades* (Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 166.

⁵¹ Goetz and Wood, *'Otherness' in the Middle Ages*, 14.

⁵² Goetz and Wood, *'Otherness' in the Middle Ages*, 23.

⁵³ Goetz and Wood, *'Otherness' in the Middle Ages*, 22.

⁵⁴ Goetz and Wood, *'Otherness' in the Middle Ages*, 14.

⁵⁵ Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 160.

⁵⁶ Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 160; Lynn Tarte Ramey, *Christian, Saracen and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (Routledge, 2001) 8, 12.

protect the minds of Christians against the added threat of apostasy.⁵⁷ Riley-Smith showed how anti-Jewish beliefs pre-existed the Crusades and were in fact deeply embedded, suggesting a volatile disposition that the Crusaders carried with them on their journey.⁵⁸ This present research will expand on this to show how Jews and Muslims similarly held preconceived ideas towards Christianity which also affected views on Christian crusaders.

Religion played a central role in shaping the ways Christians, Muslims and Jews viewed each other and peoples from other faiths. John Tolan observes the uninformed nature of the Christian chroniclers' information on the actual practices of Islam and how their accounts included information that is fictitious and imagined. The chroniclers' stress on the Muslim as pagan was the theological premise needed to sanction acts of violence against them.⁵⁹ Similarly, Jews were vilified through having their own unique role in the crucifixion of Christ which also made them liable to be subjected to violence.⁶⁰ Housley touches on Tolan's observation that the Crusaders' acts of bloodshed were evidence for their belief that they were carrying out revenge against Christ's enemies, which was directed towards pagans and Jews.⁶¹ Marcus Bull similarly notes a general trend in Crusader narratives to portray Muslims as pagan idolaters.⁶² Both Tolan and Bull observe how chroniclers placed Crusading in the context of the battle between Christianity and paganism, in which the pagans were destined for defeat.⁶³ The narratives of the Christian chroniclers are mirrored in the Jewish and Muslim texts which also weave current events, real and imagined, into their own religious contexts. Their narratives neatly summed up self-perceived superiority over an inferior religious foe which served to order their own places in the world and, more importantly, in the divine plan.⁶⁴

Hermes accounts for the Muslim side in relation to the Christian/Muslim dichotomy. He argues that European views of Islam have been much more familiar to scholarship than Muslim views

⁵⁷ Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Oneworld Publications, 1993), 301.

⁵⁸ Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 46-7.

⁵⁹ John Tolan, "Muslims as Pagan Idolaters in Chronicles of the First Crusade," in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. D.R Blanks and M. Frassetto (Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 100, 102, 104-7, 109.

⁶⁰ Tolan, "Muslims as Pagan Idolaters," 101, 106, 109.

⁶¹ Housley, *Contesting the Crusades*, 162; Tolan, "Muslims as Pagan Idolaters," 106, 109.

⁶² Marcus Bull, "The Western Narratives of the First Crusade," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Biographical History*, volume 3, ed. David Thomas (Brill, 2011), 24-5.

⁶³ Bull, "The Western Narratives of the First Crusade", 24; Tolan, "Muslims as Pagan Idolaters," 98, 100, 109-10.

⁶⁴ Tolan, "Muslims as Pagan Idolaters," 107, 111.

of Christianity, and draws attention to the need to use the often forgotten Muslim sources during the medieval period which discuss Muslim encounters with the non-Muslim Other such as the Crusaders. His work helps to balance the Muslim side of the dichotomy, and bring awareness that Said's 'Oriental' were equally capable of othering European Christians in turn.⁶⁵ This thesis builds on his work in focusing on the perspective of Muslims and their own practice of othering.

Suzanne Conklin Akbari provides insight into an 'orientalist' Middle Ages, and areas on which Said's colonial Orientalism is silent. She observes how the 'East' and 'West' dichotomy pervasive in modern scholarship was rare in the medieval period. Her work draws attention to the various cultural interchanges during this time, in particular the relationship between the image of the Saracen and the image of the Jew in the Christian categorization of differences. She highlights the stereotypes surrounding the Muslim 'Saracen' at the time of the Crusades, an image that continues to pervade into the present. The influences and effects of these stereotypes will be examined in this research on the Christian creation of the Other. The rigid dichotomy that presents Muslim-Christian relations as a one-way process of othering will be challenged through the presentation of the Muslim practice of othering, and the inclusion of a third group, the Jews.

On Jewish-Christian relations, Robert Chazan examines the group narratives involved during the eleventh to fifteenth century, a period of time he regards as significant for Jewish populations. During this period particular narratives were circulated which dictated how Christians and Jews perceived themselves and each other. These attitudes were not static, but rather would come to fuel the changing attitudes over this period and shape Christian and Jewish identities. The prevalence of broad 'images' of the Jew had effects on the mind-sets of Jews and non-Jews. Chazan works to balance the dominant narrative on Jewish suffering by drawing attention to examples of positive experiences in Jewish life during the medieval period, while simultaneously acknowledging the realities of Jewish suffering.

Similarly, Ivan Marcus addresses the cliché of constant persecution in Jewish history and draws attention to the factors which helped to shape the stereotypes on how Jews in history were viewed, in particular their isolation and persecution. He discusses how Jewish writers who survived persecution dictated how Jewish history was to be remembered, as part of a strategy to

⁶⁵ Hermes, *The [European] Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture*, 7.

build Jewish solidarity in the medieval period against outward, primarily Christian, influences. He argues that the historian's narration of this persecution history did not sufficiently represent the true complexities of Jewish history. This present research will seek to contribute to a nuanced Jewish history that draws particular attention to their practice of othering.

These samples of scholarship reveal the tendency for literature surrounding Christian, Muslim and Jewish relations to most often examine only two of these groups at a time. This has the potential of propagating a dichotomist form of thinking, recreating an 'us' and 'them' mind-set which risks perpetuating the stereotypes of the past. Rather than compartmentalizing these groups, the three faiths should be considered in a 'trialogue', where a relationship with any two should consider their relationship to the third, which can facilitate nuanced understandings and factor in the two-way process of othering.⁶⁶ This thesis does not analyse all the possible permutations (such as Muslims and Jews views of each other); but by adopting a more triadic approach, it highlights not just the differences created between each group, but also the similarities in the ways these groups othered each other.

Primary sources

Due to the limitations of word length and the desire to interpret key sources in depth, the focus of this study is on those sources (in translation) from the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These were chosen for their relevance to the other monotheistic faiths. They reflect the opinions of their time and shortly after. What they also show is that their views relating to members of other groups or faiths reflect the particularities of their own backgrounds or circumstance, and are not entirely uniform.

Important for the Muslim perspective is the Damascene religious scholar 'Ali ibn Tahir al-Sulami wrote the *Kitab al-Jihad* (the Book of Jihad), a multifaceted work of varied literary genres including propaganda and legal treatise. It was composed orally in 1105 to call fellow

⁶⁶ Philip Alexander, "The Toledot Yeshu in the Context of Jewish-Muslim Debate," in *Toledot Yeshu (The Life Story of Jesus) Revisited: A Princeton Conference*, ed. Peter Schäfer, Yaacov Deutsch, and Michael Meerson (Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 137-158.
https://ia800809.us.archive.org/28/items/ToledotYeshuTheLifeStoryOfJesus_201812/Toledot%20Yeshu%20The%20Life%20Story%20of%20Jesus.pdf

Muslims, and in particular Muslim rulers, to unite and engage in *jihad* against enemies such as the Crusaders.⁶⁷ This work is one of the earliest surviving Muslim sources written during the First Crusade, and among the first records of preaching against the Frankish Crusade.⁶⁸ As a result, his work is not representative of the general confusion with which Muslims likely greeted the First Crusade. As a religious scholar, al-Sulami draws on sources such as the Qur'an and hadith. Though his work appears to have been largely ignored by the political authorities of his day, making his work less representative of the mainstream, many of his ideas did influence the future and more successful calls to *jihad* against later crusades.⁶⁹ Al-Sulami's work provides insight into how invading crusaders were seen by Muslim religious scholars at the time.⁷⁰

One of the earliest Muslim sources to record the crusades was Ibn al-Qalanisi ('the son of the hatter') who authored *Dhayl Ta'rikh Dimashq* (The continuation of the History of Damascus), a chronicle of the city.⁷¹ He was of mature age during the First Crusade and does not appear to have taken any part in the fighting.⁷² Ibn al-Qalanisi made use of a wide range of sources including earlier histories, official documents and correspondence, eyewitness accounts and his own personal experiences of the events that unfolded in and around Damascus during his lifetime.⁷³ His work is written from a Damascene standpoint, which limits its scope to that of regional events around Damascus at the time.⁷⁴

A non-Damascene perspective is provided by Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Jubayr al-Kinani (1145-1217) who gives a valuable perspective on Christians and Muslims living outside of Al-Andalus (Islamic Spain) in the Levant and the Mediterranean regions. Originating from the Muslim majority of Al-Andalus, Ibn Jubayr was a renowned geographer, poet, and court official from Valencia, famous for his travelogue the *Rihla*, (*Journey*). His book, penned around mid-1180, describes his personal journey to Egypt, the Holy Cities of Arabia, Baghdad the City of the

⁶⁷ Niall Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders, Christianity's Wars in the Middle East, 1095-1382, From the Islamic Sources* (Routledge, 2014), 8, 20-1.

⁶⁸ Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, 20; Niall Christie, *The Book of the Jihad of 'Ali ibn Tahir al-Sulami* (Routledge, 2016), vii, 30.

⁶⁹ Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, xxvii.

⁷⁰ Christie, *The Book of the Jihad of 'Ali ibn Tahir al-Sulami*, 30.

⁷¹ Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, xx.

⁷² H.A.R. Gibb, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades* (Luzac, 1932), 8-9; Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, xx.

⁷³ Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, xx.

⁷⁴ Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, 4; Gibb, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, 9.

Caliphs, the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, and the Norman Kingdom of Sicily. Ibn Jubayr offers complex comments on Christians which are often used by scholars to offer an un-generalized and more balanced perspective on how Muslims regarded Christianity.⁷⁵ This sense of objectivity, however, detracts from the Al-Andalus lens through which he perceived and contrasted his information, which encapsulates one of the most jarring drawbacks of his text: his consistent comparisons between locations in the East with his homeland, making his work less informative concerning the true state of the Levant. Since the nature of his work was travel literature, it is also vulnerable to inaccuracies and bias based on testimonies from local guides, faults of human memory and little corroborating evidence.⁷⁶ His willingness to record positives concerning Christianity makes his text a valuable ‘anomaly’ and reveals how limited Christian and Muslim social interactions were in the context of polemical and crusade/jihad propaganda.⁷⁷

A Jewish perspective is provided by Moses Maimonides (1135 to 1204) (also known as the Rambam, an acronym of his name, Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon). He was the foremost intellectual figure of medieval Judaism, renowned as the greatest Jewish mind of the Middle Ages. He wrote legal commentaries such as the ‘Mishnah Torah’ and philosophical works such as the ‘Guide for the Perplexed’. His work synthesizes Judaism and the Islamic world, radically reconciling scientific and religious thought.⁷⁸ His notable lengthy ‘Letter to the Jews in Yemen’ was composed while living, as he lived much of his life, among Muslims and had limited contact with Christians, which may be why he wrote more positively about Christianity than about Islam.⁷⁹ His letter reveals his anti-Islamic bias which was not necessarily reflective of the complex interactions between Jews and Muslims. The Rambam was aware of the pain and bitterness Jews experienced as Christianity and Islam, each in its own manner, attempted to supersede Judaism. His letter was written in a specific context concerning a time of persecution for Yemen and was written to encourage the recipients. This perhaps makes its contents prone to exaggeration.

⁷⁵ Muhammad McCabe, “The Anomaly of Ibn Jubayr: A Voice of Moderation in a Fanatical Age.” *Clio’s Scroll: The Berkeley Undergraduate History Journal* (Spring, 2016), 35-6; Alex Mallett. “The Crusades,” in *Routledge Handbook on Christian-Muslim Relations*, ed. David Thomas (Routledge, 2019), 131

⁷⁶ Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 262.

⁷⁷ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 10, 32; McCabe, “The Anomaly of Ibn Jubayr,” 6.

⁷⁸ Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands* (The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), 53.

⁷⁹ The source used for Maimonides lengthy letter was found online. Other sources for this letter were referred to however these were incomplete and selective concerning the sections of the letter used. This research has hence chosen to rely upon the more complete online version.

Similarly writing to comfort Jewish communities, Yehudah ben Shemu'el ha-Levi (1075–1141), attempted to conjure hope for his people through his work, placing the argument for Judaism at the centre, while also expressing the deep longing of his people for renewal in their ancestral home. His most famous work, *The Kuzari*⁸⁰, written between 1130-1140, is titled a 'Book of defence for a despised religion'. Since the work was written in response to Judaism's state of despair and inferiority, despised by the two great religious powers who occupied the known world, it is coloured by this sense of oppression.⁸¹ The perspectives of the other religions are kept limited, likely because Halevi believed that persecution by Muslims and Christians alike amplified these feelings of inferiority amongst Jews. The perspectives of the other faiths are possibly created to be faulty which makes the source an unbalanced representation of actual contemporary arguments of the time. *The Kuzari* is a five-part dialogue, between a pagan Khazar king who is in search of true religion, and eventually is converted to Judaism by the Jewish sage who instructs him. Due to its fictionalized framework, the dialogue within the text is invented by Halevi. Nevertheless, it reveals Jewish thought as Halevi explores representations of the different philosophies and religions, including his perceptions of Christianity and Islam. His work is mostly philosophical, in which Halevi argued that though human reason could deduce the existence of God, it could not establish a relationship with Him. Communion with God was a divine gift and not a product of the efforts of men.

Written possibly before 1171, at the time of the Second Crusade, Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn's chronicle may be considered to be an eyewitness to events he describes, and a significant contemporary source on Franco-German Jews at this time.⁸² It portrays the persecution suffered by Jews during the Second Crusade, with a particular focus on the recording of martyrdoms, which suggests certain details which did not fit his narrative of suffering and survival may have been left out. He also includes instances where Jews were protected from violence by Christians. Though not an eye-witness himself, the disasters suffered by the Christian crusaders in the Levant against Muslims are also recorded. Rather than a chronological and objective record, he relates these events within the context of hope in the coming of the future Messiah, and interprets God supernaturally at work to preserve the Jewish people.

⁸⁰ Original text's Arabic title: *Kitab Al Khazari*.

⁸¹ Henry Slonimsky, *Kitab al Khazari (The Kuzari): An Argument for the Faith of Israel* (Schocken Books, 1964), 23.

⁸² Shlomo Eidelberg, *The Jews and the Crusades: The Hebrew Chronicles of the First and Second Crusades* (The University of Wisconsin Press, 1977) 117-8; Rabbi Ephraim's lived between c.1133 and 1196.

In like manner, The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson, is an account of the attacks of 1096 on the Jewish communities of Speyer, Worms, and Mainz by crusaders, compiled around the middle of the twelfth-century, roughly forty years after the events he records.⁸³ Though not an eye-witness of the events recorded, the text shares many similarities with other shorter Hebrew narratives such as that attributed to Rabbi Eliezer ben Nathan and this is likely due to both having drawn upon the same or similar sources, both oral and written, from eye witnesses and survivors.⁸⁴ Christian behaviour is not depicted as uniform in Solomon bar Simson's account, and he includes examples of Christians assisting Jews against crusader violence.⁸⁵ Jewish behaviour is also not depicted as uniform, with both forced conversions and martyrdom being discussed.⁸⁶ The text may be unbalanced in its portrayal of Jews as heroic figures as it was likely written to comfort Jews in the wake of the events, and provide spiritual reassurance for why they occurred.⁸⁷

Around 1109, Guibert of Nogent, a Benedictine monk living in northern France, rewrote the anonymous eyewitness chronicle of the First Crusade, the *Gesta Francorum*, roughly a decade after the event, in which he changed more than just the style and the title. As an edited text, Guibert extends upon its contents and adds his own emphasis to events which reveals those of particular importance to his own time rather than the time he writes about. His purpose was to offer divine authority for the crusade's expedition against pagans and to establish the exceptional nature of the crusade; specifically he writes with the intention of justifying the crusades. One of Guibert's most significant additions was anti-Jewish rhetoric. Guibert makes particular use of it to draw contrasting distinctions between biblical Jews and the contemporary Christian crusaders. In particular, Guibert persistently attempts to strip the ancient Jews of their accomplishments and historical significance in favour of the crusaders as the new paragon of righteousness to be referred to alongside God, as Guibert's title denotes: the deeds of God through the Franks.

The letters of Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux of the Benedictine order, are a valuable source, for attitudes surrounding the time of the Second Crusade. Bernard (1090-1153) was an abundant

⁸³ Solomon Bar Simson, *The Jews and the Crusaders*, 15; Robert Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade* (University of California Press, 1987) 42-3.

⁸⁴ Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 42, 44.

⁸⁵ Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 44-5.

⁸⁶ Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 45.

⁸⁷ Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 45.

letter writer which enabled him to be a significant influence in shaping religious thought during his time. His perspective is that of a man from a noble family, living and writing within twelfth-century monastic life and values. As a result, his perspective can be partial, omitting conflicting viewpoints since his letters were often intended to influence authority figures to support his causes. His later veneration as a saint means that only selective edifying letters considered important were likely preserved. Bernard was notably commissioned to preach the Second Crusade. He was also a participant in some events he describes, having taken a famously active role in halting Jewish persecution incited by Radulf in the Rhineland. He is regarded as holding seemingly more tolerant views than many of his contemporaries on Jews. His letters reflect attitudes towards Jews inherited by the writings of earlier Church fathers, and presents popular perspectives which were inflamed during the Second Crusade.

Unique amongst the Christian writers, William was an archbishop of Tyre, and offers a Latin-Christian perspective in his text which deals with life in the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, and which is considered by historians as a rich source of twelfth century historical information. He served as the official historian of the kingdom. His work was commissioned by King Amalric I, and covers the period from the First Crusade 1095 to the year 1184. He spent time in Western Europe, which gives his work a broad perspective on the events. He was particular on including detail on both the successful and the adverse events, setting out to create a secular work, which likely omits relevant religious realities surrounding the events he records.⁸⁸ From the 1120s until the end of his text, William provides a contemporary account of the history of the Latin East, and the political and religious interactions between the Latin East and the Muslim world. Description of them is sometimes laced with misunderstandings, though in some cases it includes an understanding of the divisions which existed within Islam which many Latin sources do not include.⁸⁹

Contrastingly, the Crusading chronicle of the First Crusade, the *Gesta Tancredi*, written by Ralph of Caen (1080-1120), a Norman priest who served under Bohemond and later Tancred, includes little accurate detail concerning Muslim belief, and instead relied heavily on established

⁸⁸ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 506.

⁸⁹ William of Tyre. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, trans and ed. Emily Atwater Babcock and A. C. Krey. 2 vols. (Columbia University Press, 1943), 323.

stereotypes and imagination.⁹⁰ Ralph's work does not appear to be based on any earlier text, nor was he himself an eyewitness to the events; rather he compiled his text from eye witnesses, in particular Tancred.⁹¹ Ralph intended his work to be understood as history and sought to recount "accurately" the deeds of the princes.⁹² As a result, his work is highly biased towards these particular individuals in order to glorify their exploits. Ralph wrote in both prose and in verse which was in popular use for heroic literary compositions. This made his work also reminiscent of not only history but also of entertainment.⁹³ The majority of Ralph's work focuses on the battle campaigns of the First Crusade.⁹⁴ He desired to contribute to the Christian historiography of his day, though this is sometimes hindered by his preference for classical verse and heavy quoting of classical works throughout his text.⁹⁵

The latest source used was by the Benedictine monk Matthew Paris (1200-1260).⁹⁶ His works are influenced by the political conflicts at the time between the crown, papacy and the nobility. His *Chronica Majora*, a universal history from creation to 1259, is recognised as indispensable as a historical source, reflecting wider contemporary thinking, despite its stylization and overt reflection of the author's prejudices.⁹⁷ It contains information about the beliefs and way of life of Muslims as well as attitudes to Jews. Matthew's aim was to denigrate Islam as a new and corrupt doctrine, and to refute the claims that Muhammad was sent from God. His account of the main teachings of Islam and lengthy descriptions of the life of Muhammad provide material that was used in later polemics.⁹⁸ Matthew is also attributed with embellishment which helped him to create a negative stereotypical image of the Jew, such as magician and murderer. These images would persist long after the late medieval period.

⁹⁰ Barbara Packard, "Ralph of Caen", in *Christian Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History (1050-1200)* volume 3, ed. David Thomas (Brill, 2011), 375; Ralph of Caen, *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen: A History of the Normans on the First Crusade*, translated by Bachrach, Bernard S. and David S. Bachrach (Routledge, 2017), 20-1.

⁹¹ Bachrach and Bachrach, *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen*, 13; Packard, "Ralph of Caen", 377.

⁹² Bachrach and Bachrach, *The Gesta Tancredi*, 6; Ralph of Caen, *The Gesta Tancredi*, 19.

⁹³ Bachrach and Bachrach, *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen*, 8.

⁹⁴ Bachrach and Bachrach, *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen*, 10.

⁹⁵ Bachrach and Bachrach, *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen*, 5.

⁹⁶ Luchitskaya, Svitlana, "Matthew Paris", in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, Vol. 4 (1200–1350)*, ed. David Thomas, and Alex Mallett (Brill, 2011), 400.

⁹⁷ Sophia Menache, "Matthew Paris's attitudes toward Anglo-Jewry". *Journal of Medieval History*, 23, no.2 (1997): 140.

⁹⁸ Luchitskaya, "Matthew Paris," 403.

There were far more Christian sources in translation available than Jewish or Muslim sources. There is unfortunately a large time-gap between these sources, where the difference in time between authors of the different groups did not always align. The sources also concern matters other than the focus of this study. In general, the selected sources are informative, providing varied and nuanced viewpoints towards the other monotheistic faiths. There is a rich selection in the sources directed towards other groups; this study could not include them all. The sections included provide access to a variety of perspectives into the forms the Other took.

Chapters overview

This research sets out to examine how Christians, Muslims and Jews viewed the Other, with a particular emphasis on the two-way flow of this process which attempts to broaden the traditional binary treatment of these groups. Additionally, it will explore how similar and dissimilar the Other was to each of these selected groups. There is some imbalance in treatment of each group. There are two chapters on Christian viewpoints and only one each on Muslim and Jewish perspectives on Christians. This reflects availability of translated sources. A chapter on the respective views of Muslims and Jews on each other would have been desirable, but the scope of this was confined to fit the parameters of this research and prevented this study developing this subject. Nonetheless, a two-way flow of othering was able to be explored up to a point, to give some indication of the effects an Other had on each of these three groups. Chapter One examines the Christian perspective on the Jews as a necessary Other which was used to validate Christian identity, in particular providing a justification of the Church as the spiritual replacement for the Jews. Chapter Two focuses on the Christian perspective towards Muslims to show how Christian writers drew upon negative characteristics from the East to construct a morally contrasting Muslim Other that validated Christian superiority and crusading violence. Chapter Three evaluates the complex Muslim perspective on Christians, and how writers crafted the Other into an inferior and polytheistic enemy in order to validate a superior identity through a revelation that superseded all other religious claims to true revelation. The final chapter looks at how Jewish writers perceived Christianity as an Other which was used to fortify their unique identity as special custodians of original divine truth.

Chapter One: Christian perspectives on Jews

Introduction

One of the most studied areas in medieval history is the interaction between Christians and their Jewish neighbours. Works by medieval historians on this interaction largely deal with the concept of the encompassing issue of anti-Semitism. An abundance of writers, such as John Gager, Albert Lindemann and Robert Chazan, have linked the relationship of anti-Semitism with Christian theology. However, the history of anti-Jewish sentiment may be seen as predating Christianity, as the Hebrew Scriptures are filled with examples of hatred directed towards the Jews as a homogenous whole, such as that of Haman in the book of Esther. Academia is saturated with works that explore anti-Semitism, which, in a manner similar to Edward Said's work on Orientalism, can have the tendency to contribute to the very faults of essentialism and generalizing tendencies it denounces. Rather than explore the well-trodden subject of anti-Semitism and its invariable link with malice, this chapter on medieval Christian perceptions of Jews will look instead at the Christian perception of Jews as the Other. This perception may be seen as a springboard for anti-Semitic sentiment; however, it also allows for an examination of stereotypes and categories that were used to delineate Christian difference from Jews.

It should be recognized, however, that the perception of Christian writers towards Jews was not uniform and had different forms and purposes. Writers on Christian-Jewish relations, such as Rosemary Radford Ruether, have argued how Christian writers in the past had a tendency to write harshly about Jews in order to affirm the identity of the Church, which they argued could only be done through invalidating the identity of the Jews.¹ However, this need for self-affirmation would suggest that every Christian writer had to denigrate the Jews in order to promote their identity, which as Kelser writes is not the case.² While a sense of Self is inevitably present in the process of othering, a group need not be othered solely in order to provide identity. Postcolonial approaches shed light on interactions between in-groups and out-groups, such as the

¹ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (Seabury Press, 1974).

² Astrid Kelser, "The Jew as the 'Other' in Word and Deed," in *'Otherness' in the Middle Ages*, ed. Goetz and Wood (2021), 167.

Other. Homi Bhabha's ideas on ambivalence and hybridity are useful in identifying the ambivalent space that Jews occupied in Christian society. They were both socially privileged, as the precursors of the Christian faith and condemned for rejecting Christianity. The Jewish Other was depicted as sinful and deserving of punishment for their rejection of the Messiah. However, Jews were also objects of mercy and prayer in order to bring about their eventual salvation. Christians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries often compared themselves to the most accessible Other that lived amongst them. As Robert Bartlett observes, most parts of Latin Europe included at least one minority: the Jews.³ It was the marginal groups living in the midst of the majority society which were an obvious target of othering strategies.⁴ The close proximity of Jews has made them in many cases the default Other within Christian society. The Jews provided Christian writers with a perceived spiritually inferior model. Not only this, but Jews made up a significant part of the Christian belief system, and hence, Christian identity.

This chapter will identify some of the main narratives which were used by Christian writers to forge the Jew as an Other. Material that formed a basis for these representations was largely scriptural, but also collected from early Church writings. There is heavy use of Bernard of Clairvaux's letters, who wrote as an influencer and advisor to many key figures in authority. His letters were written between 1130 and 1145, including events between the papal schism and the Second crusade, which Bernard personally preached for. The Benedictine monk Guibert of Nogent is also prominent in this chapter due to his unique perspective on Jews. His writings were concerned primarily with the First Crusade text the *Gesta Francorum*, rewriting this into the *Gesta Dei per Francos* about a decade after, and inserting his own emphasis on how this event was to be remembered. Another Benedictine monk Matthew Paris provides a later perspective into the progression of the image of the Jewish Other, as it applied to the context of thirteenth-century England. His work is valued for its detailed reflection of contemporary attitudes, anxieties and viewpoints of his time.

³ Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 205.

⁴ Martin Borýsek, "Strangers in the House of Israel. Confronting the Problems of Inner Diversity in Jewish Communal Ordinances at the End of the Middle Ages," in *'Otherness' in the Middle Ages*, ed. Goetz and Wood (2021), 77.

The veil: Jewish blindness and unbelief

Medieval Christian writers saw Jews as spiritually blind. This stemmed from the perceived failure of Jews to both recognize and accept their Messiah, Jesus Christ. This rejection subsequently led to the establishment of the Church. Suzanne Conklin Akbari states how Jews were condemned for their blindness and consistent refusal to recognize their Messiah and accept Christianity.⁵ This concept of Jewish blindness demonstrated how Christians as a group saw themselves as superior to Jews because they could ‘see’ the truth. The New Testament helped to lay the groundwork for a narrative which would see the common usage of ‘blind’ when referring to Jews. In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus uses the term ‘blind’ to explain the lack of spiritual insight when he refers to the prominent Jewish leaders of the day, the Pharisees, as “blind leaders of the blind”.⁶ The Apostle Paul’s letter to Gentile believers in the Church at Corinth compares the veil Moses used to hide the holiness of his shining face after communing with God, to the veil covering the hearts of the Jewish people post-Christ: “...a veil covers their hearts. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.”⁷ The distinction Paul makes in his letter between those Jews who believe and those who do not was adopted by Christian writers who used the dichotomy to differentiate Christians from the Jews, as those, who being able to see, were thus spiritually privileged. Unlike the unbelieving Jews, Christendom had no “veil” placed over their hearts, and it was perceived as divine favour that God had chosen to save people who were not Jews.

This early scriptural sense of the spiritual state of the Jews would have a very long history. As Bernard of Clairvaux in his letter to the Archbishop of Mainz around 1130, concerning recent violence against the Jews, asks: “Has that prayer which the Church offers for the Jews, from the rising up of the sun to the going down thereof, that the veil may be taken from their hearts so that they may be led from the darkness of error into the light of truth, been instituted in vain?”⁸ To Bernard, the response to Jewish unbelief was prayer. Bernard regarded the veil of spiritual blindness as imposed upon the Jews by God for rejecting His Son. However, this blindness was

⁵ Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 113.

⁶ Matthew 15:14.

⁷ 2Corinthians 3:14-16.

⁸ Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Letters of St. Bernard of Clairvaux*, translated by Bruno Scott James (Burns Oates, 1953), 466.

understood to be only temporary and that was why Christians offered prayers for that veil to be removed.

Bernard's letters reveal that this Jewish blindness was an established stereotype, and was common enough to be used even as an insult about others. In a letter to the Count of St. Gilles concerning a heretic, Bernard expresses his doubt at the man being of God, but rather compares him and his followers as possessing the spiritual blindness of Jews. He writes how with "more than Jewish blindness" did this man "close his eyes to the clear truth".⁹ In another letter, Bernard makes further use of this concept of Jewish unbelief to exhort his readers to change their ways: "Either we must obey the Apostle saying 'Extinguish not the Spirit', or we must hear with the Jews, 'You always resist the Holy Ghost'."¹⁰

Other commentators also used this idea of Jewish blindness as a form of disparagement in different contexts. Guibert of Nogent, writing about those in the East who chose to fight against the crusaders during the First Crusade, asks: "For what greater blindness is there than to make war on the sons of God? What is more blameful than to fail to acknowledge God, to glory in one's own ignorance, and to war against the faithful?"¹¹ Spiritual blindness was recognized to be contemptible and worthy of punishment for failing to recognize God, a failing Guibert regarded as legitimizing the violence of the Crusade. It was this same justification of spiritual blindness and unbelief that helped make possible the violence against the Jews, such as in 1096. Jews were regarded as being spiritually blind by nature, a state which rendered them blameful. It was possible for the rare Jew to convert to Christianity. For example, Bede was able to recognize that some Jews had overcome their blindness to acknowledge their Messiah.¹² Nonetheless, according to Jonathan Elukin, Jewish converts to Christianity were viewed with suspicion by Christians: they had essential characteristics that even conversion could not erase.¹³ Viewed as merely Jewish-Christians, converts struggled to assimilate into Christian society. Despite Christians who desired conversion of the Jews, and prayed for the removal of the veil of Jewish

⁹ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 388.

¹⁰ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 445.

¹¹ Guibert of Nogent, *The Deeds of God through the Franks: A Translation of Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, trans. Robert Levine (Boydell Press, 1997), 142.

¹² Jonathan Elukin, "From Jew to Christian? Conversion and Immutability in Medieval Europe," in *Varieties of Religious Conversion in the Middle Ages*, ed. James Muldoon (University Press of Florida, 1997), 112.

¹³ Elukin, "From Jew to Christian," 171.

blindness, even those who did convert were tainted by the negative identity assigned to the Jewish Other.

Guilt: Decide

One of the most longstanding identities ascribed to Jews was “Christ-killers”. Chazan states that Christian thinkers saw the whole Jewish people as guilty of the sin of rejecting the divinely sent Messiah and of His crucifixion.¹⁴ This culpability distinguished Christian people from the Jews. Jews were depicted in the Gospels as part of the events and were thus implicated in the death of Christ, more specifically, through the Pharisees, the Jewish religious leaders who opposed Jesus’ teaching and whom Jesus himself rebuked for their deviation from the written Law.¹⁵ Prominent in the minds of Christian writers was the image of the Pharisaic condemnation of Jesus during his trial before Pilate, demanding his death.¹⁶ Christians viewed Jewish people as unchanged since the time of Jesus, and considered the Jews of their day as no different from the Pharisees of Jesus’ day.¹⁷ The responsibility for the crucifixion of Jesus was hence extended to the contemporary Jews of the Middle Ages.¹⁸

Such a fixed view of the Jews may be seen as a form of othering. The Other is often construed as an unchanging entity in order to create stable binary opposites that better delineate Self from Other. Homi Bhabha argues how an essential component of the representation of the Other was the concept of ‘fixity’.¹⁹ The depiction of immutable characteristics to a clearly identifiable people points to the image of an unchanging, static Other.²⁰ The ascription of perpetual guilt to the Jews for Jesus’ death inherently coloured the way Christian people viewed Jews living amongst them. For example, the Jews of Bernard’s time were considered by many Christians to

¹⁴ Robert Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), xi.

¹⁵ Matthew 23.

¹⁶ Matthew 27.

¹⁷ Jonathan Michael Elukin, *The Eternal Jew in Medieval Europe: Christian Perceptions of Jewish Anachronism and Racial Identity* (Princeton University, 1994), 134.

¹⁸ Elukin, *The Eternal Jew*, 241.

¹⁹ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Routledge, 2012), 66.

²⁰ Elukin, *The Eternal Jew*, 128.

be the descendants of the Pharisees.²¹ As enemies of Christ, therefore, the Jews could always become the targets for accusations, as if tainted by the notorious crime, backed by the authority of scripture.

Bernard's letters suggest the attribution of deicide was common knowledge. It appears in a letter to the Holy Roman Emperor Lothair concerning the papal schism between Innocent II and Anacletus II, whose father was a converted Jew.²² Bernard beseeches Lothair for help in support for Innocent and to denigrate Anacletus, referring to his Jewish lineage: "it is to the injury of Christ that a man of Jewish race has seized for himself the See of Peter."²³ Elukin notes how the established Jewish characteristics could be found in baptized Jews even after several generations.²⁴ Despite having earned the support and popularity amongst Church members, Anacletus could nonetheless be tainted through the use of the Jewish label. The narrative of Jewish guilt for the death of Christ thus allowed Bernard to claim that it was an injury upon Christ that a Jew would become head of the Church of Christ. In a letter to the bishops of Aquitaine, Bernard disparages the 'false pope' whom he accuses of dividing the Church: "by dividing those whom Christ saved by unity, he makes himself not a Christian but Antichrist, guilty of the cross and death of Christ."²⁵ This text also implied that Jews could be associated with anti-Christ, the enemies of Christianity.

In another of Bernard's letters addressed to Pope Innocent II concerning a recent murder, the narrative of the Jews as responsible for deicide appears again. Bernard writes passionately for justice, making an analogy between the murderer's guilt and that of the Jews: "If you have any excuse, you whose teeth are spears and arrows, you whose tongue is a sharp sword, then the Jews are not to be blamed for the death of Christ, for they were careful to keep their hands off him."²⁶ The shame and guilt of deicide appears to be innately scribed upon the very identity of the Jew. Ralph of Caen, who wrote the account of Tancred during the First Crusade, also made mention of the disgrace and guilt attached to the Jew. Upon his arrival at Jerusalem, Tancred says:

²¹ Elukin, *The Eternal Jew*, 252.

²² David Berger, "The Attitude of St. Bernard of Clairvaux toward the Jews," in *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 40 (1972), 105.

²³ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 210.

²⁴ Elukin, *The Eternal Jew*, 224.

²⁵ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 194.

²⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 233.

“Greetings Jerusalem, glory of the world in whom our salvation, the passion of Christ, was made sport of to the shame of the Jews.”²⁷ For the crusaders, the association of Jerusalem was with Christ, but it was also connected negatively with the Jews.

Jews as a witness

The Jewish dispersion from their homeland after the destruction of the temple by Romans in A.D. 70 had an influence on how Christian writers conceptualized the Jews as objects to be othered. Their exile was looked upon as a form of atonement for their crime against Christ and God. According to Chazan, Jewish suffering and divine rejection were central elements in Christian thinking in general.²⁸ Alongside the accusation of deicide, this narrative also shaped views on the Jews living within Christian society and could be used to justify violence against them. But it also gave a reason for a qualified toleration of them. This presents the duality present in the Jewish Other.

During the onset of the Second Crusade, violence against the Jews occurred much like it had prior to the First Crusade. Bernard was commissioned by Pope Eugenius III to promote the Second Crusade in 1145. Amidst the hatred for the “pagans” which Bernard preached, a monk, Rudolf²⁹, is said to have gathered a following of those who were eager to answer the call to crusade against Christ’s enemies, and incited them to massacre the Jews.³⁰ In his letter to the English people, Bernard warns strongly that “the Jews are not to be persecuted, killed or even put to flight. Ask anyone who knows the Sacred Scriptures what he finds foretold of the Jews in the psalm. ‘Not for their destruction do I pray’, it says.”³¹ As enemies of Christianity, the killing of Jews was a justifiable action in Christian minds. However, Bernard exhorts his readers not to slay the Jews, though it is implied that he understood how it could seem right to do so considering their associative guilt. The Jews must live in order that “they may be everywhere the

²⁷ Ralph of Caen, *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen*, 128.

²⁸ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish*, 134.

²⁹ Also called Raoul.

³⁰ Storrs, Richard Salter, *Bernard of Clairvaux, the Times, the Man, and his Work: an Historical Study in Eight Lectures* (C. Scribner's sons, 1892), 178-9; Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 461.

³¹ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 462-3.

living witness of our redemption.”³² He adds that “The Jews are for us the living words of Scripture, for they remind us always of what our Lord suffered.”³³ The presence of the Jews was therefore to be tolerated, but this also turned them into a generalized group. Those who sought violence against Jews had objectified them as a homogenous group of criminals. Bernard too relegates them to the status of objects. As a whole, the Jews’ purpose was to serve as a witness for Christianity: they therefore contributed to their perceived otherness, defined solely by their collective difference from Christians.³⁴ It also seems, according to Berger, that Bernard was not motivated by any personal contact with the Jews (despite visiting persecuted Jewish communities). His attitude towards Jews was derived almost entirely from his theological learning.³⁵ Ultimately, Bernard had been charged with preaching the Second Crusade, and violence against the Jews had to be ended as it detracted from the Crusade’s true goal in the holy land “against the enemies of the Cross of Christ”.³⁶

Bernard also retains a sense that the Jews were still the cause of Christ’s suffering on the Cross. The ‘witness’ of the Jews he refers to also has another major negative implication: as a witness of their crime against Christ. Bernard stated how they were to remind Christians of “what our Lord suffered.”³⁷ For Bernard, Jews served as a negative reminder of how the Messiah suffered. According to Lindemann, “mainline Christian doctrine saw Jewish survival as useful and indeed as a reflection of God’s will.”³⁸ Bernard mentions that the Jewish people were already suffering their prescribed punishment for their rejection of the Messiah: “They are dispersed all over the world so that by expiating their crime they may be everywhere the living witness of our redemption. Hence the same psalm adds, ‘only let thy power disperse them’. And so it is: dispersed they are.”³⁹ The Jews current dispersion from their land all over the world is a form of recompense for “their crime”. Jewish dispersion was to be one of the divine punishments upon the Jews for their rejection of the Messiah.⁴⁰ Since the Jews are “dispersed all over the world” in

³² Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 462-3.

³³ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 462-3.

³⁴ Kelser, “The Jew as the ‘Other’”, 171.

³⁵ Berger, “The Attitude of St. Bernard of Clairvaux toward the Jews,” 89-90.

³⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 467-8.

³⁷ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 462-3.

³⁸ Albert S. Lindemann, and Richard S. Levy, eds. *Antisemitism: A History* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 6.

³⁹ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 462-3.

⁴⁰ Berger, “The Attitude of St. Bernard of Clairvaux toward the Jews,” 96.

a divine judgment for this specific crime against Christ, Bernard did not condone any violence but accepted their prescribed role in God's plan.

Bernard's letters propagate a negative narrative surrounding the Jews as a group, and a sense they should remain in their current state. As we shall see, he did also take the view that one day the Jews would be redeemed. But there is no proposition in his letters to improve Jewish status or alleviate their hardships. Historians have praised Bernard for his positive attitude towards Jews, but this is only in contrast with those who actively sought them out for massacre. Bernard's letters also insinuate that the main 'good' thing for keeping Jews around was in order to attest the truth of Christianity. This process was often implicit rather than overt or intended. According to Said, the notions of the Other can be set up from 'structures inherited from the past' that creates 'boundaries in our own minds' from ingrained cultural biases.⁴¹ It is this historically constructed image of the Jew which writers like Bernard are reinforcing. Early Church fathers such as Augustine also included the idea of Jews as a witness to the Church.⁴² It appears that Bernard built upon a long-established image of Jews which had become the universally accepted stereotypical image of what and who the Jew was. In the sense that Jews were vital to the Christian message and served as a witness, the Jews belonged in Christian society and their existence as Others was recognizable and familiar.⁴³ Though the Other can appear to be valued, this can be done in a stereotypical way that reassures a sense of superiority in the Self.⁴⁴

Supersession: chosen people

Medieval Christian writers perceived the additional consequence for the Jews rejection of Christ was their rejection by God and replacement with the Church. Since Jews had lost God's favour by crucifying His son, God had rejected the sinful Jews and had chosen the Church, a new more faithful people to replace them as His special people.⁴⁵ The Church replaced the Jews in their special covenantal relationship with God and were the 'new' people of Israel. This narrative gave

⁴¹ Said, *Orientalism*, 54, 122.

⁴² Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, 148.

⁴³ Baumgarten Elisheva, "Jewish Belonging in Medieval Europe: Challenges and Possibilities," *The Medieval History Journal* 27, no. 2 (2024): para. 2.

⁴⁴ Staszak, "Other/otherness," 1-7.

⁴⁵ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, xi ; Lindemann, *Antisemitism*, 6.

Christianity a special identity at the expense of the Jews, and thus may also be regarded as a way in which Christian writers sustained an image of the Jews as Other.

This narrative of Christians as a chosen people compared with others appears increasingly during the period of the Crusades. Ralph writes how Christ had “compassion for his people” and would “cast a merciful eye over his people”.⁴⁶ Christians were portrayed as a new Israel, the “holy ones”, who were more faithful than the Jews in carrying out God’s purposes.⁴⁷ Part of Pope Urban’s speech, according to Guibert, singles out the Christians as a chosen people destined for a divinely appointed future. The long awaited battle at the end of time against evil, the armies of the Antichrist will not make war “against Jews, nor against pagans, but, according to the etymology of his name, he will move against Christians.”⁴⁸ The special status of Christian peoples, in contrast to others, specifically Jews and pagans, is emphasized. In the context of the Crusades, Guibert makes a distinction between the Jews of the biblical past from those of his day: “if in the ancient text it is said of the Jews who had not yet separated from God...”⁴⁹

This rejection by God and replacing of the Jews meant that superiority of the Church over the Jews was divinely ordained. A speech supposedly made by Kherboga’s mother explains the Jews’ relationship with God and the Church. This is a portion added by Guibert and does not exist in the text of the *Gesta Francorum* which Guibert is rewriting:

“... it was said that the people who had not been his people were now his people, and those who had not been loved were now loved, and what had been among the Jews was transferred to all nations by the grace of adoption, and among the rest of them the face of the God of the Jews was provided, then who except a madman would dare attack the sons of God?”⁵⁰

In context, Kherboga’s mother is attempting to dissuade her son from fighting against the Christian army, informed by her intriguing knowledge of Christian doctrine. The Jews had lost everything to the Church through its adoption by God. The Christian crusaders are therefore called ‘sons of God’. There is no room for the Jews to share in this position with the Church:

⁴⁶ Ralph of Caen, *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen*, 63.

⁴⁷ Ralph of Caen, *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen*, 108.

⁴⁸ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 43.

⁴⁹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 68.

⁵⁰ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 97.

‘what had been’ was completely taken away from them. The Jews are used as a foil to make the Christian position with God greater. Without the Jews, Christianity would not have a basis on which to claim a special relationship with God.

Reinterpreting scripture: From Israel to the Church

The Christian perspective on the Jews was also shaped by their common scriptural tradition. Chazan observes how both Christians and Jews basically shared the same Hebrew Bible, but differed on its interpretation.⁵¹ The Scriptures, or Bible, were seen as the highest authority to derive doctrine and both faiths depended upon it for the basis of their theology. The Scriptures were often interpreted to show the prefiguration of Christ and Christian history, and to validate the Christian’s special relationship with God. For example, Ralph of Caen quotes from Psalm 136: “‘He who divided the red sea into parts and led out Israel from its midst, now consoled his desolate people.’”⁵² Ralph uses this quote to refer not to Israel, but to the Christians, who were now God’s people and worthy of success.

Recognition of a common scriptural heritage had become faint by Ralph’s day. Christianity had begun as a movement within Judaism with Jesus and his earliest followers being Jews.⁵³ Indeed, as David Horrell notes, “at the time of its origins, all of what we now call Christianity was Jewish Christianity.”⁵⁴ As Christianity spread, Jewish-Christians were isolated within the Jesus movement by the increasing number of Gentile converts.⁵⁵ As the Church grew, fewer and fewer of its followers were Jews, and less and less of the Church’s interpretation of the Scriptures was guided by the Jewish people from whom the Church had inherited the Scriptures. For example, Joseph Lynch observes how “If the Gospel of Matthew is read from a Jewish-Christian perspective, it can support the idea that Christianity is not a radical break with Judaism but rather is a perfected form of Judaism.”⁵⁶ According to Chazan, knowledge of Hebrew was rare among Christians in twelfth-century Western Christendom. This lack of understanding of the primary language of the Bible meant that the original context of the Hebrew Scriptures, that is the Jewish

⁵¹ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish*, 39.

⁵² Ralph of Caen, *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen*, 141.

⁵³ Joseph H. Lynch, *Early Christianity: A Brief History* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 38.

⁵⁴ David G. Horrell, “Early Jewish Christianity,” in *The Early Christian World* (Routledge, 2002), 1.

⁵⁵ Lynch, *Early Christianity*, 43.

⁵⁶ Lynch, *Early Christianity*, 43; Mathew 5:17-18.

perspective, was lost to Christians.⁵⁷ As a result, Christian writers developed their own context for Scripture. The Church's dependence upon the Jews' past, now distant, had diminished, leading Christianity to become an independent Gentile religion.⁵⁸ Churchmen created their tailored narratives that justified the Church's existence. The reinterpretation of Scripture meant that it no longer acknowledged dependence on the Hebrew Bible, but instead formed a narrative at the expense of Jews. Such reinterpretation formed a basis for constructing the Jew as an Other. Bernard, for example, was aware that the Holy Book of Christianity and the Hebrew Scriptures had been received from the Jews: "It is an act of Christian piety both 'to vanquish the proud' and also 'to spare the subjected', especially those for whom we have a law and a promise, and whose flesh was shared by Christ whose name be forever blessed.'"⁵⁹ Bernard's observation that Christ shared the "flesh" of the Jews is not an explicit statement that Christ was a Jew. The inexplicit reference to a 'flesh shared' instead appears to be a subtle attempt to separate Christ from Jews.

The Christian reinterpretation of the Bible may be seen as an example of what Homi Bhabha calls appropriation, the Scriptures shared a 'third space' between Jews and Christians over which the latter seized control.⁶⁰ Chazan writes how the Christian claim that the Jews had been replaced as God's chosen people meant that a narrative of Jewish history to support these convictions had to be created.⁶¹ The appropriation of the Jewish Scriptures by the Church may be seen as an example of the othering of an inferior group by a superior group. According to Goetz and Wood, the demarcation of the Other can apply to all areas of life, including an appropriation of knowledge and opinions.⁶² The Church set out to distinguish itself from its Jewish heritage in those areas that made it 'Jewish.'⁶³ Origen had accused the Jews of not understanding the Scriptures, as a result of their denial of prophecies that Christians used in support of Christ (a

⁵⁷ Robert Chazan, *From Anti-Judaism to Anti-Semitism* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 136; Constant Mews argues that some medieval thinkers acknowledged the original context of the Hebrew Bible as Jewish. See: Constant J. Mews and Micha J. Perry, "Peter Abelard, Heloise and Jewish Biblical Exegesis in the Twelfth Century," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 62, no. 1 (2011): 3-19.

⁵⁸ David C. Sim, "How Many Jews Became Christians in the First Century? The Failure of the Christian Mission to the Jews," *HTS: Theological Studies* 61, no. 1-2 (2005): 417.

⁵⁹ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 462-3; Lynch, *Early Christianity*, 43.

⁶⁰ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, chap.3.

⁶¹ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, x-xi.

⁶² Goetz and Wood, *'Otherness' in the Middle Age*, 12.

⁶³ Lynch, *Early Christianity*, 43.

further form of perceived Jewish blindness).⁶⁴ If Jews could not recognize their own Messiah then a Jewish interpretation of Scripture could easily be doubted.

Christian writers turned to allegory as the legitimate form of interpreting Scripture, as opposed to the literal Jewish interpretation.⁶⁵ This provided another basis for the Church's narrative that it had replaced the biblical Israel. Guibert's text reveals the well-established allegorical method of interpreting Scripture when he writes: "but why exercise the license of allegory, piecing words together, when historical truth prevents us from going stray in belief?"⁶⁶ Christians would radically reinterpret the Hebrew Scriptures which would come to be known as the Old Testament, an outdated prelude to the Christian New Testament.⁶⁷ The assigning of a new designation to the Hebrew Scriptures contributed to its assimilation into Christian identity and also its inevitable de-Judaizing.

The interpretation of Scripture by Christian writers before the eleventh century influenced how Jews were seen in Christian society. Chazan states how the New Testament, especially Pauline, position on Jewish history shaped Christian thinking, and offered potential for alternative interpretations.⁶⁸ Augustine in particular contributed to the de-Judaizing of Paul's writings. Writing centuries after Paul and the Jewish dispersion of A.D. 70, once the original Jewish recipients of Paul's letters were forgotten, Augustine read his own interpretation into Paul's writing, emphasizing Paul's title as an Apostle to the Gentiles. This pushed the significance Paul had placed upon his own Jewish people to the side and put greater emphasis upon the entity of the Church and Gentile believers who, by Augustine's time, had become a dominant power.⁶⁹ There has been much modern scholarship concerning the influence of Paul's letters upon subsequent Christian anti-Jewish thought, to the extent that Paul is referred to by some as 'the arch-villain of Christian-Jewish relations' since his letters were used to rationalize supersessionism. The reinterpretation of Paul's letters by the later Church resulted in narratives which were ironically contrary to Paul's message, in which Jews lost their special place as God's

⁶⁴ Elukin, *The Eternal Jew*, 104.

⁶⁵ Elukin, *The Eternal Jew*, 13, 53.

⁶⁶ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 142.

⁶⁷ Lindemann, *Antisemitism*, 23.

⁶⁸ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 43.

⁶⁹ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 44. Over time the term Gentile was used by the Church to signify 'heathen', leaving behind its original biblical meaning of denoting a 'non-Jew'. See: Leo Spitzer "The Gentiles," in *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 45, no. 4 (1946): 444-7.

people in covenantal history to the replacing Christians.⁷⁰

The reinterpretation of portions of a text coloured how the rest of the text was read. Theologian Arnold Fruchtenbaum states how from a historical Jewish context, scripturally there is no replacement of Israel. The contrasts in the New Testament do not concern the Church and Israel, but rather, comparisons between (spiritual) Jews of faith who believed in the Messiah and (physical) Jews who did not.⁷¹ Scriptural dichotomies such as this were reinterpreted by Christian writers of the medieval period to draw distinction between Christians and Jews. The metaphorical interpretation of Scripture allowed for the existence of a spiritual Israel (Church) and a physical Israel (Jews).⁷² Guibert allegorized the Scriptures he uses to make passages that were attributed to Judah, Israel, or the Jews, to mean the Crusaders, the Church or Christians, and thus could be applied to the crusaders' liberation of Jerusalem. For example: "Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, in Jerusalem."⁷³ If Jerusalem is the Church, its place is the faith of Christ...⁷⁴ Such reinterpretation of Scripture provided proof that crusaders were following a pattern of deeds done by God, which solidified their special position as God's people. Guibert's quote from Scripture transforms the context of the text to relate to the Crusades: "Judah, that is, the faithful people, will besiege Jerusalem, acknowledging that it will be trodden by the nations." He clarifies further: "Whom shall I call the leaders of Judah, unless they be the leaders of that faithful army, who prayed that the inhabitants of Jerusalem be confident, when they ardently desired to restore the holy city by means of the strength of the Christian army, so that Christianity might grow, the Lord's memory be honoured".⁷⁵ Again, Judah becomes the Crusaders, the faithful people currently besieging Jerusalem. Jerusalem is allegorized as the Church, the proper place in which those who put their faith in Christ may dwell. Bernard, like Guibert and other writers of the twelfth-century, also reinterpreted terms such as 'Israel' and 'Jerusalem' in a spiritual sense, and to mean Christianity.⁷⁶ In a letter to the Archbishop of Tours concerning support for Pope Innocent, Bernard disparages Innocent's rivals

⁷⁰ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 39.

⁷¹ Arnold Genekovich Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology* (New York University, 1989), 722-3.

⁷² Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology*, 462.

⁷³ Zechariah 12:6.

⁷⁴ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 143.

⁷⁵ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 141-2.

⁷⁶ Berger, "The Attitudes of St. Bernard of Clairvaux toward the Jews," 98.

as scheming maliciously “against the people of God”.⁷⁷ Bernard views the church as synonymous with Israel: “The kingdom of Israel, that holy city” is not to do with the Jews but “is ‘the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth’”.⁷⁸

Crusaders outdo the Jews: support of God

Christian writers claimed a superior position with God at the expense of Jews through the Crusade. The Crusade was a physical representation of God’s divine favour for His new chosen people. Despite the conflict being between Christian and Muslim military forces, writers of the Crusade involved the Jews to emphasize the righteousness of Crusader aims. Another reason for this was the fact that holy war was still a fairly new concept to Medieval Christians, and writers looked back to the wars of the Israelites and Maccabees in order to comprehend a war that involved their God.⁷⁹

Guibert’s account of the First Crusade is based on the *Gesta Francorum*, but departs from this text to include references to the Jews. Guibert’s crusading Christians are venerated at the expense of the Jews of the past. He is careful to distinguish between Jews who could be treated negatively and those in the past who could not. Since the biblical history of Israel was considered to be spiritually inherited by the Church as the ‘New Israel’, its prominent righteous figures are the exceptions due to their “radiance” which was “celebrated by the church of God”.⁸⁰ A separate class of Jews who were venerated for their obedience was contrasted with a class who disobeyed God and were too spiritually distant from the Church: “we do not place in this class the blessed Joshua, David, Samuel, but we are speaking of the despicable vanity of the Jewish people”.⁸¹ These were the unfaithful of Israel, those who “looked back” longingly to return to their captivity in Egypt, even after they had received God’s miraculous aid.⁸² The Maccabees are mentioned frequently by Guibert as holy warriors of the past surpassed by the Crusaders.⁸³ The

⁷⁷ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 189.

⁷⁸ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 189.

⁷⁹ Elizabeth Lapina, "Anti-Jewish Rhetoric in Guibert of Nogent's *Dei Gesta per Francos*," *Journal of Medieval History* 35, no. 3 (2009): 241, 246.

⁸⁰ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 107.

⁸¹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 107.

⁸² Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 145.

⁸³ Lapina, "Anti-Jewish Rhetoric", 243.

Jews of the past fought for unworthy motives, waged by “wretched men, serving God for their bellies only”.⁸⁴

The capture of Jerusalem in 1099 was an event of immense significance, and was seen to confirm the new covenant between God and the ‘New Israel’, and reinforced the view that the Church had replaced the Jews as the chosen people.⁸⁵ The Crusade was a divine event, like those in the Hebrew Scriptures, except, unlike the wars faced by the Jews in the biblical past, the Crusade was a uniquely Christian event. Indeed, the Crusade is greater than any war waged by the Jews in the past. For Guibert, the Crusade is God’s work in his own present time: divine favour now belonged to Christians and no longer to the Jews. God could demonstrate His favour or disfavour in the physical world and the Crusade was an outworking of God’s divine providence.⁸⁶ God had performed miracles among the Jews in the Hebrew Scriptures and He would do the same for crusading Christians. The same God who once saved His people by miracles in the past, according to Guibert, had “...also granted glory to our own times”.⁸⁷ Earlier achievements of the Jews in biblical history paled in comparison as God’s power was now being made “manifest in modern times” in a greater way that had ever been shown for the Jews: “no one in any age has ever heard” of the “remarkable things” which were done during the expedition. These could be “described in their entirety by no one”.⁸⁸ Indeed, “the ancients, who excelled in their victories in war, may refrain from excessive pride, when they think of how modern men have done better than they.”⁸⁹ The Crusade was an event which “we cannot offer examples from the past to match” drawing emphasis to its importance to the point that he did not believe an event like it could compare to it in the future.⁹⁰

Guibert emphasises the Christian ‘supersession’ of holy warriors in his version of Pope Urban II’s speech: “If the Maccabees once deserved the highest praise for piety because they fought for their rituals and their temple, then you too, O soldiers of Christ, deserve such praise, for taking

⁸⁴ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 107, 124.

⁸⁵ Norman Housley, *Contesting the Crusades* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 17.

⁸⁶ Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 157.

⁸⁷ Zechariah 12:7, Levine, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 143.

⁸⁸ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 124, 143, 147.

⁸⁹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 143.

⁹⁰ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 147.

up arms to defend the freedom of your country”.⁹¹ The Jews as holy warriors had relevance only in the past, showing how the Jews’ holy wars had been made obsolete by the Crusade, undertaken by God’s new chosen people. He writes how if “celestial help appeared long ago to the Maccabees fighting for circumcision and the meat of swine, how much more did those who poured out their blood for Christ, purifying the churches and propagating the faith, deserve such help.”⁹² The present holy enterprise surpasses the battles of “long ago” since their battles were “for Christ” and served to propagate the faith. While the Jews fought “merely to fill the belly”, the Christian Crusaders fought in a grander scalar against enemies such as the Antichrist.⁹³

Besides exalting the holy feats of Crusaders above those Jews of the past, Guibert also warns his readers not to admire the miraculous deeds done in the past for the Jews, “let us not admire the fleshy wars of Israel”.⁹⁴ Elsewhere he states that “if someone cites the sons of Israel and the miracles God performed for them, I shall offer something more miraculous.”⁹⁵ The Crusaders “continually experienced” divine aid from God, and their miraculous victories served as proof of God’s favour. They, and not the Jews, are the ones whom God now protected against innumerable foes.⁹⁶ It was now Christianity and not the Jews who had the support of God.⁹⁷ Thus, Guibert compares Gideon’s small yet divinely successful army with “these few men today”.⁹⁸ The successes of King David and other kings who succeeded him “could in no way equal what our own men have done.”⁹⁹

The Jews of the past, with exceptions, were seen as unworthy warriors whose successes could not possibly be “more pleasing to God than those whose whole spirit was devoted to him.”¹⁰⁰ The Jewish warriors were unworthy in God’s sight because of their lack of spiritual devotion to God. Battles were won by Crusaders because they “relied spiritually” upon God, and were

⁹¹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 43.

⁹² Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 110.

⁹³ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 43, 124.

⁹⁴ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 124.

⁹⁵ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 145.

⁹⁶ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 143.

⁹⁷ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 159.

⁹⁸ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 151.

⁹⁹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 143.

¹⁰⁰ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 107.

undertaken “purely out of spiritual desire” rather than inferior physical desires.¹⁰¹ Fighting with spirituality distinguished the Crusaders from their pagan enemy. Compared with the latter, the Jews’ only redeeming virtue was that “perhaps...they were not idolaters”.¹⁰² The Jews of the past fought for God without the spirit of devotion that the spiritually superior Crusaders of the present did. As armed pilgrims, Crusaders could prove their love for God through not yielding to the “tortures of hunger and thirst, nor to the fear of various forms of death.”¹⁰³

The suffering of the Crusaders was synonymous with their spirituality. For Guibert, it proved their superior spirituality as the true chosen children of God over the Jews of the past. Guibert observes how “modern men seem to have undergone pain and suffering greater than that of the Jews of old”. Meanwhile the Jews had comforts in their trials, including the company of their wives, food, and visible angels.¹⁰⁴ The perceived ease of the Jews’ experience to the Crusader’s experience emphasizes that God favours those who were willing to suffer for Him. The absence of suffering in the Jews’ experience of ‘frequent victories’ and a general ‘abundance of everything’ could not possibly be more pleasing to God than that of the Crusaders.¹⁰⁵ The Jews, who had ‘spurned’ heavenly food given to them by God during the exodus could not compare to the Crusaders “who were comforted by the food of the word of God only, like divine manna, when they had no earthly hope.”¹⁰⁶ This intense suffering cemented the Christian’s superior relationship as God’s children: “God torments with whips every child whom he loves”.¹⁰⁷ Their willingness to die, endure deprivation and punishment in the temporal world, for the sake of God’s teaching meant the Crusaders were truly “His children”, and worthy to receive spiritual gifts and God’s affection.¹⁰⁸ Rather than knights, Guibert compared the Crusaders to the lives of impoverished monks. In contrast to the Jews, these Crusaders had “great difficulty” in their accomplishments and lived in “great need”, and yet “remained steadfast” in their “devotion” and eagerly embraced poverty and suffering, preparing their hearts for the ultimate expression of

¹⁰¹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 124, 159.

¹⁰² Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 107.

¹⁰³ Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 345; Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 151.

¹⁰⁴ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 141-2.

¹⁰⁵ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 107.

¹⁰⁶ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 145.

¹⁰⁷ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 143; Hebrews 12:6.

¹⁰⁸ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 107.

their faith through martyrdom.¹⁰⁹ The Crusaders were the faithful Church, mirrored by the unfaithful Jews. When the Crusaders suffered defeats in battle, these were attributed to their own sins and God's parental discipline, rather than a sign of rejection or disownment as was the case for the Jews.¹¹⁰ Successfully suffering the chastisement of God made the Crusaders worthier of God's help than the Jews. This comparison further solidified the perception of the Jews as superseded by the Christians.

Redemption for the Jews

There were some twelfth-century writers who aided in the propagation of a less negative perspective of the Jews as a people who would one day be redeemed. Bernard is critical of those who physically harmed the Jewish people, in particular the massacre carried out at the onset of the Second crusade. In a letter to the Archbishop of Mainz, Bernard criticises the errant monk seen as responsible for preaching against the Jews. He writes that he finds "three things most reprehensible in him: unauthorized preaching, contempt for episcopal authority, and incitation to murder."¹¹¹ Bernard condemns this man for his actions, yet says little that is disapproving of this monk's attitude. Bernard appears more concerned with his wayward actions, attributing them to his "father", the devil, and who, like the devil, was "from the first a murderer, a liar, and the father of lies" and his heresy a "hellish wisdom".¹¹² This letter reveals polar attitudes that existed during this time towards the Jews. Where some saw killing the Jews as equal to the cleansing of "pagan" Saracens, others could see the same actions as "murder". Where some saw the Jews as no less the enemies of Christ than the Saracens, others saw the inspiration to such preaching against the Jews as derived from the greatest enemy of Christ: the devil.

William of Tyre had a different sympathetic perspective towards the Jews. He wrote to record the history of Jerusalem, both adverse and propitious. He mentions those whose work came before him, referring to distinguished historians such as Titus Livius and Josephus who "made known in his comprehensive works not only the brilliant deeds of the Jews, but also those

¹⁰⁹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 109, 145.

¹¹⁰ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 100.

¹¹¹ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 465.

¹¹² Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 466.

shameful things which were done to them.”¹¹³ William’s inclusion of Josephus in his work points to a different perspective on the Jews that was possible within Christian tradition. His apparent sensitivity towards the Jews is notable. William draws attention to the many brilliant things done by Jews, which is unique for a Christian writer. He shows an insight into the history of the Jews and observes the things done to them were negative, suggesting sympathy. Though from Ralph’s text the Jews are to be shamed for their treatment of Christ, William here appears to acknowledge that acts perpetrated against them could also be considered shameful.

William also condemned the ill-disciplined hordes of people during the First Crusade which unleashed one of first notable mass attacks upon the Jews by Christendom. Rather than proceed in divine obedience along their pilgrimage for Christ, they “turned aside to mad excesses. They cruelly massacred the Jewish people in the cities and towns through which they passed, for the latter, having no reason to fear anything of the kind, took no precautions.” William refers to the baleful influence of Count Emicho, who joined the pilgrim bands, and “was not a censor of morals, as be seemed his high rank, nor was he one who reprov ed excesses but [who], on the contrary ... shared in the evil deeds of his followers and urged them on to crime.”¹¹⁴ William’s criticism of these earlier actions against the Jews appears to be in line with Bernard’s view on the later massacres. He also notes that the Jews had no reason to fear such violence, and had taken no precautions. Though William is writing of events before his time, his writing reflects shock at these attacks, and like the Jew, saw no precursor for the violence.

According to Lindemann, the prevailing Christian perspective did not view Jews as entirely evil. Christian morality was understood to be greatly influenced by the Jews’ Hebrew Scriptures. Some Christians even recognized that Christ and his disciples were all Jews, limiting the potential demonization of Jews as a physical entity.¹¹⁵ As Bernard’s letters show, the Christian goal was to convert the Jews, not to destroy them physically: “Is it not a far better triumph for the Church to convince and convert the Jews than to put them all to the sword?”¹¹⁶ By drawing attention to those who pray for the Jews, Bernard’s letters reveal that not all Christians sought the sword against them. God’s redemption plan for the Jews, according to Christian

¹¹³ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, translated and annotated by Emily Atwater Babcock and A. C. Krey (Columbia University Press, 1943), 506.

¹¹⁴ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 113.

¹¹⁵ Lindemann, *Antisemitism*, 6.

¹¹⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 466.

interpretation, was that they would eventually abandon Judaism and become Christian. In other words, Jews would not be redeemed to their previous special relationship with God as Jews, but could only receive redemption through the Christian avenue as Christians.¹¹⁷ Ultimately, conversion was the preferable option over slaughter because it was the spiritual victory to be attained. It was the option that validated Christianity at the cost of Judaism, as the superior faith and possessor of divine truth. The alternative was not desirable to Christians. In the aftermath of Jewish martyrdom, which occurred in the wake of the Crusades, in particular 1096, Christians were confronted with an unsettling ambiguity. Chazan writes how Christians were faced with Jews who were prepared to become martyrs and die for their faith which caused them to doubt the validity of their own faith.¹¹⁸ The physical slaughter of Jews called into doubt the superior spiritual position Christians believed they held, and was essentially regarded as a spiritual defeat.

Although the Jews remained as yet unsaved and hence lesser than Christians, they were superior to certain other unbelieving peoples. Bernard distinguished the Jews favourably from the pagans. He condemned the massacres generated by the Crusades, and identified those enemies of Christ who were deserving of such violence. Conversely, the Jews “...only wait for the time of their deliverance” a time set aside when “all Israel shall be saved.” He elsewhere poses the question: “If the Jews are utterly wiped out, what will become of our hope for their promised salvation, their eventual conversion?” The salvation of the Jews was a certain event that would take place in the future, when the veil covering the Jews’ heart would be removed. According to Romans, this ripe time would be “when the fullness of the Gentiles shall have come in, then all Israel will be saved”, and according to the Psalms “the Lord is rebuilding Jerusalem, calling the banished sons of Israel home’.”¹¹⁹ Though Bernard’s message is favourable towards the Jews’ preservation, his portrayal of the Jews as redeemable also implies their current religious status is invalid, pitiable and ultimately negative.

¹¹⁷ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, xi.

¹¹⁸ Robert Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 131.

¹¹⁹ Romans 11:25–26, Psalms 147:2.

Changing Characteristics: later depictions

The figure of the Other is fluid and prone to vary depending on its context.¹²⁰ In the case of the Jews, there was a notable increase in the negative perception of them as a homogenous group by the thirteenth century, particularly in England. Bartlett observes the hardening of anti-Jewish feelings after the eleventh century.¹²¹ There were complex factors that led to the change in the Jews' image in Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹²² Judaism as a heresy influenced this image with the translations of the Talmud in the thirteenth century, when it was discovered that the Talmud was not the same as the Christian Old Testament. This served to distance the Jews from Christianity in their difference and increase their image as an errant Other.¹²³ Matthew Paris catalogues many negative characteristics used in association with Jews that appear to be both common and widespread by his time. The precedent of physical violence against the Jews set by the Crusades led to further pogroms, such as the massacre in York in 1190 and elsewhere in England.¹²⁴ Elukin argues that Jews did not change in Christian eyes.¹²⁵ However, the image of the Jew changed both negatively and positively over the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Jew as an Other became increasingly solidified; positive narratives faded and some of them fell increasingly silent. This happened amidst a profusion of negative narratives which clothed the Jews in a garish assortment of negative characteristics.

The motif of the Jew as a murderer was common by the thirteenth century. Popular stories appeared that Jews murdered Christian children for their blood.¹²⁶ Accusations of this blood libel were common enough by 1247 for Pope Innocent IV to denounce them in his bull to protect Jews

¹²⁰ Goetz and Wood, 'Otherness' in the Middle Ages, 12, 28.

¹²¹ Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 236.

¹²² Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians* (University of California Press, 2006), 290.

¹²³ Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (University of California Press, 1999), 329.

¹²⁴ Christoph T. Maier, "Crusaders and Jews: The York Massacre of 1190 Revisited," in *Anglo-Norman Studies XLIV: Proceedings of the Battle Conference* (2021), 105.

¹²⁵ Elukin, *The Eternal Jew*, 128.

¹²⁶ William C. McDonald, "The 'Jew in the Latrine': Exploring the Transmission of an Early German Anti-Jewish Narrative," *Medieval Encounters* 28, no. 1 (2022): 136; Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton University Press, 1994), 4; Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 151; Robert Chazan makes the hypothesis that Christians connected the willingness of Jewish martyrs to kill their own families rather than convert during massacres to the killing of Christian children, to represent hostility to the Christian faith: Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 213.

from this latest threat.¹²⁷ The story told by Matthew Paris of a Jew's murder of his wife reflected this trope. Matthew related how a certain Jew was "quite rich" and friendly with a local Earl "for some improper reason or other". He was "Abraham by name but not in faith": he is therefore disassociated from his devout namesake.¹²⁸ He is contrasted with his victim, his "beautiful" and also "faithful wife". More abhorrent is his desecration before his crime of a statue of "the blessed Virgin" which "the Jew set up in his latrine" for that very purpose. In this, Matthew echoed the Christian view of the Jews' urge to display hostility towards Christian symbols (such as stealing communion wafers to torture); as well as the connection of Jews in some way with faeces which was also a common trope in Matthew's day.¹²⁹ When the Jew's wife has compassion for the revered Christian symbol and washes the defiled statue, her husband "impiously and secretly suffocated his wife".¹³⁰

The Jews had also come to be seen as a more homogenous and threatening whole. After the Jew in Matthew's story was imprisoned for his crime, "he promised most positively that he would prove all the Jews in England to be the basest traitors." He accused the Jews (as other Jews also accused him) "of clipping coins and other serious crimes".¹³¹ In the end, after the Jews had tried to bribe those protecting him to stop doing so, the Jew paid the king a large amount of money with the help of the friendly earl to free himself from his sentence of life imprisonment. The murdering Jew therefore evades justice and walks free.¹³² Matthew can be seen as purposely framing the Jew as part of a villainous group. The initial name given at the beginning is dropped, and for the rest of the story Matthew refers to him generically as 'the Jew'.

The image of the Jew was also associated with treachery. In another story Matthew highlights the treachery of Jews in general concerning a plot, likely imaginary, in which Jews attempt to smuggle weapons to the Tartars. This plot is initially successful, for "the Christians...permitted these wicked Jews to make this wicked present to their wicked enemies".¹³³ The term 'wicked' is

¹²⁷ Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, 37.

¹²⁸ Richard Vaughan and Robert Vaughan, *Chronicles of Matthew Paris: Monastic Life in the Thirteenth Century*. (Sutton, 1986), 214.

¹²⁹ Menache, "Matthew Paris's Attitudes toward Anglo-Jewry," 140; Storrs, *Bernard of Clairvaux*, 177.

¹³⁰ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History*, 22.

¹³¹ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History*, 22.

¹³² Vaughan, *Chronicles of Matthew Paris*, 215.

¹³³ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History*, 357.

shared with other enemies of Christendom along with Jews, which serves to emphasise the iniquity of the latter. The Jews concealed the weapons, “their treachery”, into casks. When they arrived in Germany and fell under suspicion, the Jews stated that they were working for Christians and had secretly been sent to poison the wine of their enemies. When this story is doubted, and the weapons found, the discoverer cries out “Oh, unheard-of treachery, why do we allow such people to live amongst us?” An exclamation that likely reflects Matthew’s own attitude concerning the Jews. This statement embodies a mindset that would eventually influence the expelling of the Jews from England years later in 1290.¹³⁴ The “extraordinary deceit of the Jews”, in this story meant they were to be “handed over to the executioners, to be either consigned to perpetual imprisonment, or to be slain with their own swords.”¹³⁵

Matthew also includes a story that seems to extend the well-established view of the Jews’ inability to see the proof of Christ in the prophecies of their Hebrew Scriptures. A man informs a bishop of a discovery he made while studying in Athens. He claims that while learning from certain Greek doctors, he had discovered a portion of Holy Scriptures that contained “prophecies concerning Christ” which he claims were testaments from the sons of Jacob. He states that this proof of Christ “had long been concealed through the malice of the Jews”. Matthew’s story embellishes the long-standing stereotype of Jewish animosity towards Christianity: it is evidently not ‘blindness’ that prevents them seeing Christ as the Messiah, but their malice which induces them to wilfully hide prophecies concerning Christian doctrine in the Hebrew Scriptures.¹³⁶ The Jew is denigrated as a hate-filled Other, and through this, the correctness of the Christian creed is emphasized.

Matthew regards the Jews as a servile group. Bernard of Clairvaux had also referred to the Jewish status of servitude, who “under Christian princes they endure a hard captivity.”¹³⁷ As part of their divine rejection, Jews were seen as required to serve Christianity.¹³⁸ This reduced Jews into a commodity, who individually could be owned. Pope Innocent III, in 1205, mentioned the ‘perpetual servitude’ of the Jews, and the Fourth Lateran Council, in 1215, created distinctions concerning the improper subordination of Christians to Jews. According to Mark Cohen, during

¹³⁴ Miri Rubin, *Cities of Strangers: Making Lives in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), chap.3.

¹³⁵ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History*, 358.

¹³⁶ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History vol2*, 484; Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 212.

¹³⁷ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 462.

¹³⁸ Menache, “Matthew Paris's Attitudes toward Anglo-Jewry,” 142.

the twelfth and especially thirteenth centuries as the papacy struggled to assert its supremacy over secular rulers, it also asserted its authority over the Jews by disseminating the ideas of Jewish subservience and inferiority.¹³⁹

Matthew imagined the mindset of the Jewish smugglers to whom he attributes the words: “God Adonai has permitted [us] to be so long oppressed under Christian rule” and also the intention to “liberate” themselves from their rulers and to oppress their Christian masters in return.¹⁴⁰

Elsewhere, Matthew mentions how the king extorted from citizens of London a sum of money “as if they were of the lowest order of slaves” comparable to “that servile race the Jews”. The servile treatment of Christians was thus unnatural, whereas the servile and lowly place of the Jews compared to Christians was correct.¹⁴¹ In these texts and contexts, Jews lost their own purpose and agency and existed as a tool at the service of Christians.¹⁴²

The Jews were also tainted by their association with money. In the twelfth and into the thirteenth century, Jews were increasingly involved in moneylending following the Church’s prohibition of Christians collecting interest from other Christians.¹⁴³ Situations such as the debts incurred from the Crusades caused many to resent their Jewish creditors and to accuse them of inflicting suffering on Christian populations by their usury.¹⁴⁴ Christian indebtedness to Jews was likely seen as improperly giving Jews too much authority over Christians.¹⁴⁵ Bernard of Clairvaux had hinted at this negative view on Jews’ moneylending. He uses the image of the Jew as a censure towards Christian money lenders who work in places where “there are no Jews”. Bernard wondered “if they can be called Christian” since it grieved him to say, they acted “in a manner worse than any Jew.”¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, the Jew is used as a benchmark which apparently marks one of the lowest levels to which an individual’s spirituality could fall. Matthew built on the image of the Jew as greedy. He writes of the king extorting large amounts of money from the Jews to the extent that they were impoverished. But none of these victims of the king’s avarice

¹³⁹ Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, 38.

¹⁴⁰ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History*, 357.

¹⁴¹ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History* vol2, 526.

¹⁴² Julia Costa Lopez, “Beyond Eurocentrism and Orientalism: Revisiting the Othering of Jews and Muslims through Medieval Canon Law,” *Review of International Studies* 42, no. 3 (2015): 459.

¹⁴³ Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 22; Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 130.

¹⁴⁴ Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 188; Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 93.

¹⁴⁵ Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, 35.

¹⁴⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 462-3.

deserved pity, “for they were proved to have been frequently guilty of false coinage and forgery of seals” and rather used the opportunity to make their “wickedness” apparent “to more people.”¹⁴⁷ The image of Jews as “money-clippers” spoke to a fear in England over the decrease in the value of money. Matthew is eager to point out what he “found to be a fact” that coins were cut round “by the circumcised and infidel Jews” who did this, and other crimes, as a result of the financial burden imposed by the king.¹⁴⁸

Conclusion

Christian views on Jews can be usefully interpreted as a process of othering. Perceptions of Jews among Christians were mostly negative. They emerged partly through a reinterpretation of the Scriptures inherited from a Jewish culture, Jewish context and Jewish authors concerning a Jewish religious sect. Over time these reinterpretations fostered negative stereotypes concerning the Jews, who were granted no agency. Instead, the Jews were reduced by medieval Christian writers to a series of stereotypes devoid of complexity or accurate representation. The use of biblical texts helped to form the Jew as an Other, an obsolete antitype to Christianity, which Christian writers used in order to establish Christian superiority over a rival monotheistic religion. Once the Jew was established as an Other, violence and expulsion could more easily be justified against them as a group in situations of tension and conflict. These narratives built upon by Christian writers of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries can be seen as reinforcing one another, knitting together to create a coherent image of the Jews’ place in history and their inferior identity. They also served as explanation for the existence of the Church and Christianity, strengthening a sense of the Christian Self. The development of narratives which produced the Jew as an Other coincides with the refining of Christian identity. Goetz and Wood observed how otherness reveals the unconscious concepts of Self, expressed both explicitly and implicitly in medieval societies.¹⁴⁹ In light of this, there is likely a distinction in the intentional demonizing and the unintentional propagation of ideas surrounding the Jewish Other made by medieval Christian writers.

¹⁴⁷ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History vol2*, 340.

¹⁴⁸ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History*, 215.

¹⁴⁹ Goetz and Wood, *‘Otherness’ in the Middle Ages*, 24.

The concept of the spiritually blind Jew assisted in the homogenization of the Jewish people in a negative manner separate from Christianity, characterized by their persistent unbelief. This would then form the basis for their perceived extra-biblical inferiority compared to Christianity which was accentuated by subjecting them to denigrating comparisons. For Christianity, negative connotations towards the Jews were founded primarily on a scriptural basis which vilified the Jews for their rejection of Christ in the Gospels. The attribution of guilt to the Jews for the death of Christ furthered the narrative of Christian superiority in God's eyes and the Jewish Other as a rejected whole. Their perceived hostility to Christ led to the potential for Jews to be labelled as anti-Christians which came to justify violence against Jews as a homogenous group, which occurred during the First and Second Crusades.

Positive narratives were used to counter violent actions against them. But these narratives, however well-meaning, turned the Jews into an objectified living witness for Christianity, reducing them further into the negative image of an inferior Jewish Other. The positive narrative of the Jew as a witness for Christianity used to protect them from violence also served as a continual negative reminder of their crime and rejection of Christ. More favourable and varied attitudes were still held concerning the Jews, especially in regard to the hope for their eventual future conversion to Christianity. This suggests that during the eleventh and twelfth centuries in particular the primary goal presented by Christian writers was not the destruction of the Jews but their conversion, despite their flawed image as Others. Though positive narratives existed, the Jewish Other was defined by Christian writers in terms of how it benefitted Christian identity, and not by its own independent merits outside of Christian society. Christian writers placed the benefit of Christian superiority before the wellbeing of the Jewish people. Prayer and conversion were not only merciful and fitting for followers of Christ, but would benefit the Church's self-identity as a superior faith.

From at least the twelfth century, and certainly by the thirteenth, the image of the Jew became increasingly negative such that Christian writers could easily expand this negative image with denigrating stereotypes, including an association with excrement, money, treachery, and covert hatred towards Christianity. Christian writers also moved from a passive othering to a more intentional demonization of Jews. Matthew attributes crimes, in effect, to the Jewish Other, whose established association with greed and money could enable his readers to find them easy

to believe. These negative narratives grew, to the point that the Jew would also become the embodiment of malice in the time of the Black Death.¹⁵⁰ Changes in Christian identity coincided with the increasingly negative Jewish associations, as the Church detached itself further from its Jewish past. This growing detachment would allow room for further dangerous changes to occur in the image of the Jew as an Other.

¹⁵⁰ Lindemann, *Antisemitism*, 6.

Chapter Two: Christian perspectives on Muslims

Introduction

One of the most used ‘us vs them’ dichotomies in modern scholarship on the Middle Ages is that between Christians and Muslims. Edward Said’s work on Orientalism testifies to the longevity of this dichotomy: he places this East and West distinction at the forefront of his analysis, and describes the Orient as one of Europe’s “most recurring images of the Other”.¹ The clash of polarized opposites depicted in medieval writings during the Crusades has provided scholars with opportunities for binary portrayals. According to John Tolan, Europeans around the thirteenth century defined their perceived superiority from a religious basis.² The Self and the Other were similarly shaped by religious imperatives, to the point that Christian writers presented non-Christian beliefs in Christian terms. Schaller argues how simplified worldviews, such as West and East, Christian and non-Christian, served to help define the Other. The ways in which Christian writers typically viewed the east outside of Christendom were woven into the particular created image of the Muslim Other. Negative characteristics associated with Eastern lands were incorporated into features thought to define the Muslims and their religious beliefs. This chapter will examine the process of incorporating stereotypes about the East into perceptions of the Muslim.

Said writes that the Orient helped to define Europe as its “contrasting image, idea, personality, experience” in order to reinforce its own system of values and appear morally superior in comparison.³ The Muslim Other was to reflect a mirror opposite of Christian virtue. Christian writers would depict the Muslim Other as having a propensity for immoral behaviour and portray Islam as everything they saw Christianity was not.⁴ Tolan argues how the pagan Other was used

¹ Said, *Orientalism*, 1.

² John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (Columbia University Press, 2002), xvii.

³ Said, *Orientalism*, 9-10; Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 280.

⁴ Schaller, “*Crusader Orientalism*”, 3; Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 5.

as an “essential foil” for Christian virtue.⁵ The emphasis upon characteristics that made the Muslim Other negative reveal how Christian writers perceived their own self-identity as the opposite of these characteristics. Specific impulses, such as the social and religious upheaval caused by the Crusades, were to encourage Christian writers to portray Muslims as existing on the “periphery of humanity”.⁶ This chapter takes a closer look at Christian writers’ perceptions of Muslims in the Middle Ages to better understand the nature and the origins of the stereotypes that created the Muslim Other.

Outside Christendom: Characteristics of the East

Medieval Christian writers had preconditioned attitudes towards places outside of Christendom which influenced how Muslims were seen. Robert Bartlett observes that those living in Christendom were conscious that the rest of the world was not Christendom.⁷ Although the existence of Christendom conjured in the minds of medieval Christians its mirror image of heathendom, a binary distinction between East and West was not common amongst medieval Christian writers and is only rarely found in medieval texts and maps.⁸ Medieval Christian writers possessed a sense of East and West but this did not take the strict, absolute form of eighteenth-century Orientalism.⁹ Schaller argues that for the medieval Occident, the Orient was not a place to be dominated in the way that Said states it was for later Orientalists, but rather, it was a place of military, technological, and material superiority.¹⁰ Similarly, Suzanne Conklin Akbari writes that for most of the Middle Ages the dominant power in the world was not Christendom but rather the lands of Muslims and that it was likely an awareness of this sense of inferiority which played a crucial role in the development of Orientalism.¹¹ Vilifying the dominant threat outside of Christendom through negative qualities allowed Christian writers to maintain a sense of superiority and Self. Aman Nadhiri observes that otherness was the expression of medieval thinkers’ efforts to articulate difference from those outside of

⁵ Tolan, *Saracens*, 129.

⁶ Nadhiri, *Saracens and Franks*, 195.

⁷ Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 253.

⁸ Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 3, 35.

⁹ Phillips, *Before Orientalism*, 18.

¹⁰ Schaller, “Crusader Orientalism”, 4.

¹¹ Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 9.

Christendom, in which the dominant feature was the assertion of the centrality of their position within the world.¹² Similarly, Akbari argues that for medieval Christians, defining Islam also defined the Christian Self.¹³

Like much of the medieval world, geographic locations were perceived through a predominately religious lens and had attached to them associations of different beliefs which were prone to be stigmatized.¹⁴ Medieval Christian writers believed that nations possessed various defining characteristics.¹⁵ Lands in the east of Latin Christendom were seen as being especially susceptible to paganism and heresies. Guibert of Nogent saw Christians living in this region as more likely to abandon Christianity.¹⁶ He describes how the faith of Easterners “has never been stable” but “has always been variable and unsteady, searching for novelty, always exceeding the bounds of true belief”.¹⁷ Notably this perception did not extend to those who migrated to the Crusader kingdom: “the Italians, French, and English who migrated there, have flourished” while others native to those lands had lost their strength.¹⁸ This instability was a result of the environment which influenced an individual’s body and intellect and produced errant beliefs. The East produced various teachers who taught “useless commentaries” which led people away from sound Christian doctrine.¹⁹ As a result, “the Eastern regions were lands cursed on earth in the work of its teachers, bringing forth thorns and prickly weeds for those working it.”²⁰

The East was also characterized as a place where pagan-divination was practiced and these coloured perceptions of the Muslim. Guibert writes how “the study of the stars” was more intense due to “its steady use and constant study, among the Easterners, where it had its origin”, contrasting with Christendom, in which “Westerners have only the mildest interest”.²¹ Guibert recounts a story of a nobleman’s visit to a wise Saracen who had looked at a “celestial sign” to

¹² Nadhiri, *Saracens and Franks*, 196.

¹³ Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 280.

¹⁴ Staszak, "Other/otherness," 4.

¹⁵ Alan V. Murray, "National Identity, Language and Conflict in the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1096–1192," in *The Crusades and the Near East*, ed. Conor Kostick (Routledge, 2010), 110.

¹⁶ Levine, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 32.

¹⁷ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 30.

¹⁸ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 31.

¹⁹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 30.

²⁰ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 30.

²¹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 150.

indicate the eventual military victory of the Crusaders before the Crusades had begun.²² He also describes how the mother of the Turkish general Kherboga “diligently studied astronomy” to determine the fate of her son in a battle against the Crusaders, discovering “in certain secret books of a pagan sect that the Christian people would rise up” and that the Saracen people “would inevitably be conquered by Christian men”.²³ Elsewhere though he mentions “the pagans admit that they had received a prophecy”, and emphasise their inability to find the exact time of fulfilment “because of their limited skill”.²⁴ Despite a proficiency in fortune-telling, people in the East were perceived as limited in their abilities, and unable to prevent the future triumph of Christianity. The Crusade is glorified as a significant moment in history long foreseen, even by its enemies. Guibert writes how his audience may find it “unbelievable” to be “able to learn the future through the art of astrology”, which suggests the practice was foreign, and understood to belong in places outside Christendom where mystical arts were thought to thrive.²⁵

The lands in the East were associated also with the miraculous biblical past which strengthened a sense that characteristics associated with the East were unchanging. The East’s association with prophecy was likely derived from the biblical past. Like the biblical prophets, the land east of Christendom was the source of biblical history which invariably conjured up associations with that past, to the extent that the East was viewed as unchanged from its associated biblical connections. Christian writers solidified this idea by referring to biblical nomenclature in regards to the lands east of Christendom, the most frequent being that of “Babylon” and “Jerusalem”.²⁶ Said states that it was a common belief among Orientalist thinkers that “the Orient never changes, the new is simply the old betrayed by the new”. An analogous belief can be found among medieval Christian thinkers.²⁷ Henry Schaller argued the concept of a temporally static east which existed in Crusader narratives depicting it as existing closer to the past than Christendom.²⁸

²² Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 151.

²³ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 96-8; see also, 150.

²⁴ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 150.

²⁵ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 151.

²⁶ Schaller, “Crusader Orientalism,” 4.

²⁷ Said, *Orientalism*, 104.

²⁸ Schaller, “Crusader Orientalism,” 32-3.

The static east was also culturally inferior. William of Tyre writes how Latin physicians were scorned by eastern princes and their women who preferred the medicines and practices of Jews and Saracens and other local people. These individuals “recklessly” put themselves under the care of such practitioners and trusted their lives “to people who are ignorant of the science of medicine.”²⁹ Moreover, regions in the East outside of Christendom were also regarded as being full of riches and extravagance. Orientalism also came in the form of depicting the East as a place of extreme wealth and unrestrained lust.³⁰ Guibert describes the enemy as having “such wealth, that everywhere one looked there were only men and tents, expensive furnishings, the brilliance of variegated costumes, flocks of cattle and sheep to be eaten, and women”.³¹ Yet all of the East’s wealth is depicted as unable to help them against the power of Christianity. One of the principal reasons for this was the vices in which they indulged.

A major vice attributed to the people of the East by Christian writers was an unnatural lustfulness. Schaller observes how Christendom could characterize the East as a frighteningly sexual place.³² Guibert writes extensively concerning the sexual sinfulness of those outside of Christendom, in particular those groups against whom the Crusaders were to battle. It was common in scripture for God to visit punishment upon excessively sinful nations by using the invading army of another nation.³³ Guibert echoes this when he states how “God could not tolerate their ripe wantonness” and “cast out the excrement of such destructive inhabitants.”³⁴ The East was a place where “reverence for all that was called Christian was handed over to the brothel” and the people broke “all human laws”.³⁵ Lust in this region was worse than insanity “with couplings unheard of among beasts” and further immoral acts “to which Christians may not give a name”.³⁶ These “wretches” were not content with their “many women” but resorted to “using men also” where their propensity for lustfulness “overflowed to the point that execrable

²⁹ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 192-3.

³⁰ Schaller, “Crusader Orientalism,” 24.

³¹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 103.

³² Schaller, “Crusader Orientalism,” 24.

³³ Examples include Gen 15:16, 2Kings 17, Habakkuk, Isaiah 13.

³⁴ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 37.

³⁵ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 37.

³⁶ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 37.

and profoundly intolerable crime of sodomy”.³⁷ Excessive lust with women might be excused “since it is at least in accord with nature”, but the sin of sodomy made those in the East “worse than animals.”³⁸

The same narrative of eastern disposition to vice and lustfulness was propagated by Matthew of Paris in the thirteenth century with a few additions. He writes that “according to their law, a man may take three or four wives” as well as keeping as many female slaves and concubines “as they can manage or feed”.³⁹ The purpose of the Saracen’s holy book was in fact to encourage lust, since it taught that the chief command from God was to multiply. The Saracen’s religious leader had also ordered his followers to “have many wives and concubines” despite God having given “only one Eve to one Adam”.⁴⁰ Polygamy, according to Matthew, was contrary to the “two in one flesh” union ordained by God; the polygamist Lamech in Genesis “was rebuked by God, and punished worse than the first murderer.”⁴¹ Muslim sexual excess was worse even than murder; while their unnatural and animalistic behaviour defied Christian virtues of chastity. Muslim practices went so far as to condemn the Christian value of virginity as a form of barrenness.⁴²

A nation without God

The condemnation of excesses of people who inhabited the East was one form of othering, but a more fundamental form was to condemn them as unbelievers. The ‘Saracen’ was the most common and highly generalized term which Christian writers used to refer to Muslims, Turks, Arabs, heathen, pagans or non-Christians.⁴³ The term can be othering in that it is a distanced, generalized, and negative categorization of a group. The ‘Saracens’ can be seen as embodying the undesirable characteristics attributed to regions in the East, although they were primarily defined in terms of religion and ethnicity. Christians or Arab-Christians living in the East were

³⁷ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 37.

³⁸ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 37.

³⁹ Paris, *Matthew Paris’s English History*, 23.

⁴⁰ Paris, *Matthew Paris’s English History*, 24.

⁴¹ Paris, *Matthew Paris’s English History*, 23.

⁴² Paris, *Matthew Paris’s English History*, 24.

⁴³ Nadhiri, *Saracens and Franks*, 11.

not included in this category.⁴⁴ ‘Race’ was less important in categorizing people than belief and a predisposition to unbelief. To refer to a people as a group without God was inherently negative; it contrasted fundamentally with Christian identity which was based on a relationship with God. William of Tyre refers to Arabs as “that race of unbelievers”.⁴⁵ He writes how the Holy City had been under “the domination of unbelieving enemies” and “oppressed” by “infidel princes” and a “nation without God.”⁴⁶ In William’s account of Pope Urban II’s speech concerning the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, unbelief is associated with the Saracens, who were considered the epitome of unbelief and wickedness. The Holy Land had been forcibly taken “by a people without God”.⁴⁷ They were descended from “the sons of the Egyptian handmaiden” which refers to Abraham’s eldest son, Ishmael, born of Hagar, his wife Sarah’s handmaiden. This was a scripturally based depiction of the chosen and the rejected (Ishmael was not chosen by God in contrast with his younger brother Isaac, born of Sarah, whom God chose).⁴⁸ According to Tolan, Christian writers considered that the Saracens were the descendants of Ishmael, who were therefore a people without God’s favour.⁴⁹ William describes how the Saracens had placed the Holy Land and its Christian inhabitants into “undeserved bondage”, and regards the Saracens as more rightly deserving the captivity they imposed upon the spiritual descendants of the “free woman” in the Holy Land.⁵⁰ He asks “but what is written? ‘Cast out this bondwoman and her son’”. Saracen occupation was thus connected to a biblical wrong which needed correction.⁵¹

As a people without God, Christendom’s enemies are subsequently regarded as evil. William refers to them as “the wicked race of Saracens” and “the sacrilegious race of Turks”.⁵² He also categorizes the “race of Turks” as wild, “a very rude people with no fixed place of habitation”.⁵³ This portrayal is reminiscent of the Christian description of nomadic barbarians existing in a state below civilized Christendom. Elsewhere, William describes the powerful “infidel prince” as

⁴⁴ Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 285.

⁴⁵ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 433.

⁴⁶ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 63-4.

⁴⁷ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 89.

⁴⁸ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 89.

⁴⁹ John Tolan, “Jews and Muslims in Christian Law and History,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Abrahamic Religions*, eds. Adam J. Silverstein and Guy G. Stroumsa (Oxford University Press, 2015), 7.

⁵⁰ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 89, 91-2.

⁵¹ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 90.

⁵² William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 90, 296, 414.

⁵³ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 72.

being the “lord of that wretched and perfidious race, the Turkomans”.⁵⁴ In early ninth-century European writings, little distinction was made between Muslim invaders and other barbarian invaders, such as the Vikings. According to Norman Daniel, the early Arab expansion was just another pagan intrusion into Christendom.⁵⁵ These early Christian writers generally exhibited little curiosity concerning barbarian people, and were instead content to catalogue them under the same negatively generalized terms that previous writers had used.

Islam as a heresy: perspectives on Muhammad

The religious errancy of the Muslim Other was also categorized by Christian writers as a form of heresy. There are rare allusions to Muslims mentioned as both pagans and as heretics; for example, Guibert identifies the Saracen beliefs as “the pagan heresy”, which suggests Christian categorization of Islam was not as clear cut as it was of Judaism.⁵⁶ By the early ninth century, as a greater understanding of Muslim beliefs developed, some Christian writers promoted the view that Islam was influenced by Christian heretics, which led to Muslim beliefs being viewed as a form of heresy.⁵⁷ Information concerning Islam was largely gained from Christian and Muslim interactions,⁵⁸ and first-hand knowledge of Islam through the twelfth-century translation of the Qur’ān into Latin would not become widespread until the invention of printing.⁵⁹ Said writes how Christendom responded defensively to the threat that this religion presented, and Islam was judged to be a fraudulent version of Christianity.⁶⁰ Guibert describes Islam as the “nefarious sect” beginning under “the name of Christ” but its followers had since “wiped out his name”.⁶¹ Significantly, Guibert describes the spread of the heresy as having come from “the furthest

⁵⁴ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 528.

⁵⁵ Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: the Making of an Image* (Oneworld, 1960), 338.

⁵⁶ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 36.

⁵⁷ Mark I. Beaumont, “Early Christian Attitudes towards Islam,” in *Routledge Handbook on Christian-Muslim Relations*, ed. Thomas David (Routledge, 2019), 110.

⁵⁸ For example, see William’s understanding of the difference between Shiite and Sunni Islam, William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 323.

⁵⁹ Robert Gerard Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw it: An Analysis of the non-Muslim Sources Relating to the Rise of Islam* (Darwin Press, 1997), 94; David Thomas, *Routledge Handbook on Christian-Muslim Relations* (Routledge, 2018), 2; Robert Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and their Enemies* (Penguin, 2007), 71.

⁶⁰ Said, *Orientalism*, 59.

⁶¹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 35.

corners of the East.” In particular he emphasizes its threat to Christendom by pointing out how it dwelt in “even the more remote coasts of Spain - a country near us”.⁶²

Daniel argues that the threat Islam presented resulted in fictitious writing in order to protect the minds of Christians against the apostasy of Islam, especially those dwelling in the East.⁶³

Christian writers stressed the inferiority of Islam in order to dissuade Christians from converting, and labelled it a heresy, despite the privileges in status that conversion would give under Islam for these eastern Christians.⁶⁴ Tolan observes how Spanish and eastern Christian writings from the ninth century presented Islam as a debauched heresy.⁶⁵ The creation of myths concerning Muslim beliefs within Christendom was not only to vilify Muslim beliefs but also to reaffirm Christian superiority.⁶⁶ Through copious writing, Christians came to possess an image of the Muslim Other which reduced the theological threat that Islam presented. As Said writes, Christian writers “handled” Islam by disparaging it.⁶⁷ Tolan argues how the portrayal of Muslims as the Other rendered them an inert object, useful and harmless to Christians.⁶⁸ The label of heretic was a term of othering that was already used to brand Christians regarded as deviant. In particular, Guibert writes of the propensity of people in the East to wander into “paths of evil” and to “follow their own devices”.⁶⁹ The assumption that the East conjured various heresies and false doctrines made Islam another errant belief created by eastern regions. Guibert wrote that Muslim beliefs were born out of an intent “to undermine the Catholic teaching everywhere”, constituting its identification as a heresy. Presenting Islam as a theological threat to Christianity served to further emphasize the villainy of the Muslim Other.⁷⁰

Christian writers emphasized the differences between the faiths to delegitimize Islam and to protect the legitimacy of Christian religious identity. This difference was exaggerated to the point that Islam became a mirror image of Christianity. For example, the Crusaders’ foes at Antioch asked permission to kill the Christians “from the chief pontiff of their heresy” who was

⁶² Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 35.

⁶³ Beaumont, “Early Christian Attitudes towards Islam,” 112; Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 301.

⁶⁴ Tolan, *Saracens*, xx.

⁶⁵ Tolan, *Saracens*, xx.

⁶⁶ Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 301.

⁶⁷ Said, *Orientalism*, 59.

⁶⁸ Tolan, *Saracens*, xx, xxiii.

⁶⁹ Psalm 80:13

⁷⁰ Goetz and Wood, ‘Otherness’ in the Middle Ages, 19-20.

“their pope, in the likeness of ours”.⁷¹ Muslim beliefs were an antithesis of Christianity, and made as dissimilar from Christian truth as possible. Christian understanding of Islam’s veneration and worship of Muhammad was the equivalent of the Christian worship of Christ. This led to many attacks upon Muhammad as the head of this heresy to denigrate the Muslim as Other.

Islam was ascribed to a particular person whom Guibert names “Mathomus”.⁷² The heretical beliefs of the Muslim were intrinsically tied to their religious leader Muhammad. To protect Christian exclusivity to God, Christians wrote at length to demonize Muhammad by portraying him as the opposite of Christian virtue. He was described as excessively licentious, guilty of immoralities against Christianity, and his teachings were the result of collaboration with the devil rather than God. Daniel writes that this fictional Muhammad invented through Christian writings was a character which no Arab would recognize.⁷³ This fiction was intensified under the influence of the Crusades, which caused misconceptions surrounding Muslim beliefs to be exaggerated to emphasize differences between the two warring groups. In Guibert’s description on the origins of Islam, he found it necessary to include a reason for his writings on the “nature of this new teacher” since he had found none of the church doctors had written “against his licentiousness.” Muhammad had an established reputation “for great crimes” which Guibert saw as continuing to spread even in his day.⁷⁴ He felt justified in passing judgment upon the prophet, because “one may safely speak ill of a man whose malignity transcends and surpasses whatever evil can be said of him”.⁷⁵

Muhammad was regarded as spreading “the poison of false belief” and “wretchedly” deceiving souls.⁷⁶ William of Tyre describes the “kingdom of the Orient” as under the power of “the successors of Muhammad” who “oppressed all who held the opposite opinion”.⁷⁷ He describes the aggressive spread of Islam which forced entire provinces in the East to their “impious

⁷¹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 94.

⁷² Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 32.

⁷³ Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 273.

⁷⁴ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 32.

⁷⁵ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 32.

⁷⁶ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 33, 35.

⁷⁷ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 324.

superstition and perverse dogma”.⁷⁸ William describes Muhammad as the Muslims’ prophet and “their destroyer” who seduced the weak and susceptible minds of the people of the East into his “superstition”.⁷⁹ He also describes how Christians in the East had resisted conversion to “their poisonous doctrine” and “the heresies of this seducer” where they managed to preserve their faith and stood in “the midst of erring nations.”⁸⁰ Muslims are presented as spiritually weak unlike the staunch Christian people who could resist the heresy.

By the tenth century, Christian writers had commonly come to consider Muhammad as a false prophet, who led people into heresy and the East “away from belief in the Son and in the Holy Spirit” and taught them to acknowledge “only the person of the Father” and denied the divinity of Jesus.⁸¹ Guibert considered Muhammad as a false prophet who practiced fake miracles. In one story, after having asked God to deliver a law, Muhammad trained a cow to follow him in order to introduce a new law tied to its horns in a falsely miraculous manner. This amazed the people and his deception was greeted with the applause from his ignorant audience.⁸² The Muslim is indirectly portrayed here as gullible and easily deceived by trickery. In the thirteenth century, Matthew of Paris had notably more to say concerning Muhammad, suggesting how popular the stereotypes propagated by these fictitious writings had become. Matthew refers to him as the “false prophet Mahomet” who through the use of “empty discourses” exalted himself above all other “wise men of the East”.⁸³ He confessed “with his own mouth that he never had and never should perform miracles” and thus the Saracens who claimed that he did “must be considered false.”⁸⁴

Specific characteristics attributed to Muhammad were used to denigrate his legitimacy. Muhammad is portrayed as the culmination of negative attributes ascribed to Muslims, the embodiment of eastern vices. Muhammad was associated with exceeding lustfulness and sensuality, which is connected to his seduction of minds.⁸⁵ According to Guibert, the prophet is an ambitious manipulator who went from poverty to richness and fame by using his talent of

⁷⁸ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 241.

⁷⁹ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 323.

⁸⁰ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 241.

⁸¹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 32.

⁸² Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 34.

⁸³ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History*, 24, 27.

⁸⁴ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History*, 18.

⁸⁵ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History*, 17.

seduction which “infatuated the minds of many persons” into false doctrine.⁸⁶ This background downplays the success of Muhammad’s large following and emphasizes how his rise to greatness was not due to God. Additionally, he is depicted as “surrounded by brilliant riches” as though prey to the sin of greed.⁸⁷ Guibert connects the prophet’s lustfulness with his epilepsy, the contraction of which was a form of divine punishment. Matthew attributes this to his boasting: “the Lord therefore struck him with incurable epilepsy”.⁸⁸ In keeping with his portrayal as a deceiver, Matthew writes how in order that the “imposter” prophet might not lose his authority due to his illness, “pretended” that he was conferring with heavenly beings.⁸⁹

Christian writers sought to explain away the popularity of his teachings as to the result of its lax laws that allowed vices and appealed to people who were spiritually weak. Guibert writes how Muhammad made laws that “loosened the reins of every vice for his followers, in order to attract more of them”.⁹⁰ Matthew surmised that Muhammad’s specific teachings appealed “to the lusts of the flesh” rather than the spiritual “virtues” prized by Christians which raise men “to heaven”.⁹¹ Akbari observes that throughout the literary tradition, Islam was depicted as a religion that sought only to satisfy carnal impulses and prized earthly joys more than heavenly ones.⁹² Guibert describes how the “profane man” taught that Muslims could have “free rein for every kind of shameful behaviour”: the heresy was thus linked to the established attitude about the East’s sensuality and tendency towards sin.⁹³ Christianity, in contrast, was a religion of the next world which rejected worldly pleasures.⁹⁴ Matthew specifies that Muhammad’s “testamentary law” did not come from a heavenly source but from the earth.⁹⁵ These writings make insinuations as to the kind of people that Muhammad was able to deceive: ‘Saracens’ with their propensity for unnatural carnality, and people in “distant lands”.⁹⁶ The prophet deceived these people’s uncertain minds with the inclusion of prayers and fasting to create “the pretext of religion”.⁹⁷

⁸⁶ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History*, 27.

⁸⁷ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 33.

⁸⁸ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 33.

⁸⁹ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History*, 23, 27.

⁹⁰ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 34.

⁹¹ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History*, 28.

⁹² Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 251.

⁹³ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 32.

⁹⁴ Tolán, *Saracens*, xx.

⁹⁵ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History*, 25.

⁹⁶ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 34.

⁹⁷ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 34.

Muhammad's followers "cloaked his wickedness as much as they could" to deceive people into believing he was a prophet, unlike the Christian writers, who could see the deception and wrote to expose the truth to their Christian audience.⁹⁸ This heresy was also explained to be the will of God who had "given their hearts to an evil way of thinking" and the Muslims would in time suffer God's "judgments" for their false beliefs.⁹⁹

At the root of Islam, Christian writers perceived a satanic influence that warped its imagined Christian origins. One of the most significant ways that Muslims were portrayed as evil enemies of Christ was identifying the origins of their heretical belief as coming from "The Ancient Enemy" of Christianity, the devil.¹⁰⁰ Guibert claims Muhammad was filled with the "profane teaching drawn by the devil's piping."¹⁰¹ With this unholy power, Muhammad is portrayed as deflecting his audience away from Christianity and into a depraved mirror image of it. Similarly, the use of the term 'antichristians' denotes a demonic association.¹⁰² Potential enemies of Christianity were labelled as antichrists, just as the Jews were; even particular popes could be labelled as the antichrist by their Christian political enemies.¹⁰³ Upon reaching Jerusalem, Ralph of Caen's protagonist Tancred discovers a statue, which after some hesitation he identifies not as a statue of Christ but as an idol, an image of "the first antichrist, the depraved and pernicious Mohamet".¹⁰⁴ Tancred's initial indecision whether to call the statue Christ or an antichrist draws attention to the direct contrast Ralph draws between Christ and Muhammad: an antichrist. Ralph has Tancred go on to state: "If only his comrade were here, would that he came! For my foot would crush both of the antichrists here".¹⁰⁵ The "comrade" is most likely a reference to the devil. The "foot" probably refers to Genesis 3:15 in which the devil appears as a snake whose head was destined one day to be crushed by Christ.¹⁰⁶ The law introduced by Muhammad indirectly through the devil condemned "all of Christian morality ... by a thousand reproofs" and

⁹⁸ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History*, 28.

⁹⁹ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History*, 28.

¹⁰⁰ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 33.

¹⁰¹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 34.

¹⁰² Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 43.

¹⁰³ Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing*, 73; Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 188, 194.

¹⁰⁴ Ralph of Caen. *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen: A History of the Normans on the First Crusade*. Translated by Bachrach, Bernard S. and David S. Bachrach (Routledge, 2017), 144.

¹⁰⁵ Ralph of Caen, *The Gesta Tancredi*, 144.

¹⁰⁶ Genesis 3:15.

became Christianity's opposite by calling "whatever examples of goodness and strength the Gospel offered...cruel and harsh".¹⁰⁷

Christian writers also denounced Muhammad as a false prophet by propagating stories that denigrated his claim that he was sent by God. Guibert describes as false the idea that he had been taken up to heaven, insinuating that only the gullible Muslim could believe such a claim. His followers, Guibert argues, regarded him as "just a man", contrasting with the superior Christian belief of Jesus' divinity.¹⁰⁸ Muhammad's death was unmiraculous; only his followers "imagined that he had been taken up into heaven".¹⁰⁹ Since Muhammad was an imposter, excessively sinful and a particular enemy of Christianity, he was deserving of an ignominious death. Guibert uses epilepsy (a mark of divine punishment) as the cause for Muhammad's eventual demise. Out on a walk alone, Muhammad suddenly fell into an epileptic fit and was found by pigs that devoured him leaving nothing but his heels. The filthiest animal is made to devour the prophet so that "the master of filth appropriately died a filthy death".¹¹⁰ The description of Muhammad leaving behind his heels is likely a symbol for immorality and filth.¹¹¹ His followers, though, regarded the heels "as a monument for his faithful adherents, who visit them with great veneration".¹¹² They were thus false relics, the reverse image of true Christian relics.¹¹³ Matthew's account embroiders on the connection between Muhammad and filth, describing how he "fell on a dung heap" overcome by illness, before he was discovered by an "ugly" sow. Muhammad was gluttonous and before his death he "greatly indulged" so that the smell of food with which he was "stuffed" had attracted the pigs who smothered and devoured him.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁷ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 34.

¹⁰⁸ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 36.

¹⁰⁹ Tolan, *Saracens*, 143.

¹¹⁰ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 35.

¹¹¹ Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 232.

¹¹² Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 36.

¹¹³ Tolan, *Saracens*, 143.

¹¹⁴ Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History*, 27.

Muslims as pagans

The association most commonly made of the East outside Christendom was with paganism, a theme which grew during the Crusades. Interactions with Muslims within Christendom were sparse outside of the Iberian Peninsula and eastern Christian regions from the eighth century, and little was known concerning Muslims as a people or their religion.¹¹⁵ Muslims were seen by Christian writers as non-Christian, and were commonly depicted as idolatrous which served as an inferior opposing Other for Christian virtue.¹¹⁶ When Muslims and Christians did interact more around the time of the First Crusade, Christian writers described the Saracens as polytheistic idolaters.¹¹⁷ This portrayal safeguarded Christian religious superiority from the threatening presence of the East. As long as they could establish themselves as possessing the theological and moral right, Christians could explain away any setback at the hands of Muslims.¹¹⁸ This pagan description of Islam contrasted with the monotheistic Christian faith and served to characterize Muslims as religiously errant and unworthy. As ‘pagan’ Muslims were people separated and alienated from God, contrasting with Christians who possessed exclusive knowledge of God.

Pagan beliefs were perceived as the opposite of Christian. Christian writers repeatedly describe Muslims not only as the enemies of the Crusaders but also as enemies of Christ as a result of their paganism. The First Crusade, could therefore be framed as part of an age-old struggle against paganism.¹¹⁹ As Marcus Bull writes, the Crusade was portrayed as an “asymmetrical battle between the revelation of truth and its denial by paganistic polytheists”.¹²⁰ In his writings, Guibert emphasized the pagan beliefs of the Crusaders’ enemies, on occasion pausing to insist on

¹¹⁵ Dana Carleton Munro, “The Western Attitude toward Islam during the Period of the Crusades,” *Speculum* 6, no. 3 (1931): 329.

¹¹⁶ Tolan, *Saracens*, 129.

¹¹⁷ Tolan points out that of the First Crusade chroniclers, Guibert of Nogent was the only one who acknowledged that the Saracens were monotheists, see: Tolan, “Muslims as Pagan Idolaters”, 99.

¹¹⁸ Schaller, “Crusader Orientalism”, 4.

¹¹⁹ Tolan, “Muslims as Pagan Idolaters”, 98; Tolan, *Saracens*, xx.

¹²⁰ Marcus Bull, “The Western Narratives of the First Crusade,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History* Vol 3, 1050-1200, ed. David Thomas and Alex Mallett (Brill, 2011), 24.

the matter: “At this point one should add, ‘Their God,’ since their thoughts were not directed to any but their own God, that is, the Christian God.”¹²¹

Ralph of Caen stresses the pagan identity of the Crusaders’ foes by specifying the goal of the Crusaders to restore Christianity to Jerusalem by extinguishing the “idolatry” which had replaced it.¹²² In Ralph’s account of the capture of Jerusalem, Tancred’s apparent discovery of an immense “cast image, made from silver” which sat “on the highest throne”: this was an “image of Mohamet”, richly decorated in gems, gold and purple, as Ralph likely imagined a pagan idol to look like. Ralph’s work was influenced by classical writers and their descriptions of paganism. Similarities with the classical pantheon likely came to mind when medieval Christians thought of paganism. At first sight of the statue, Ralph has Tancred exclaim it was an image of “Mars or Apollo” as if they were part of the Saracens’ pantheon along with Muhammad.¹²³ Matthew also repeats the narrative that the Crusader’s enemies worshiped idols like pagans, describing an “image of Mahomet at Mecca” which had fallen down to the delight of the local Christians.¹²⁴ The ‘paganism’ of the Muslim, ‘Roman’ and outdated, served to make Islam an inferior faith compared to the monotheistic faith of Christianity.

In connection with their ‘paganism’, Muslims were also categorized as immoral criminals. Guibert tells the story of a noble who pilgrimaged to Jerusalem and went “among the pagans”, conversing with a wise local, who lived a virtuous life “by Saracen standards”, implying these were morally inferior to Christian ones.¹²⁵ The people whom the Crusaders battled against were described by Guibert as “diabolical”, “arrogant”, “abominable” and “the worst men”.¹²⁶ Muslim Turks are “evil enemies” which justified the Crusaders’ eager desire to spill their blood.¹²⁷ Muslims were depicted as comprised of the worst attributes of humanity which befitted their status as non-Christians, against whom violence could be justified.¹²⁸

¹²¹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 143.

¹²² Ralph of Caen, *The Gesta Tancredi*, 19.

¹²³ Ralph of Caen, *The Gesta Tancredi*, 144.

¹²⁴ Paris, *Matthew Paris’s English History*, 529.

¹²⁵ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 151.

¹²⁶ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 105-8, 151.

¹²⁷ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 84.

¹²⁸ Tolan, *Saracens*, 126.

The immorality ascribed to Muslims appears in a host of alleged crimes. In his version of Pope Urban II's speech, William has the pope chastise those Christians who battle amongst themselves,¹²⁹ and beseeches them rather to do battle against the enemies of Christianity, "those guilty of thefts, arson, rapine, homicide, and other crimes of similar nature" who "shall not possess the kingdom of God."¹³⁰ These crimes are attributed to those whom the Crusaders are commissioned to do battle against: the Saracens. Upon the outset of the Crusades, the Muslims were framed by Christian writers as immoral. Saracen women were as immoral as Saracen men. Guibert relates how women were brought in to the enemy camp in order to reproduce. When the battle was over, these women left behind their new-born babies and "heartlessly cast them away" in their urgent flight from the crusaders.¹³¹ This portrayal of pagan mothers as unnaturally heartless provided another contrasting image of otherness.

Muslims were portrayed as evil who sought to destroy Christianity.¹³² The various versions of Pope Urban II's speech are laden with accounts of the pagan attacks on the holy sites, such as in Jerusalem, which were used to enrage the Christian audience and encourage an active response. According to William, the pope describes Jerusalem as "the cradle of our faith" which had been "forcibly held by a people without God". The occupation of Jerusalem was an injury to Christendom, since according to Guibert, the Holy Land had belonged to Christianity "since ancient times".¹³³ In a meeting with a pagan leader, the Christian leaders were shocked to find that pagans had "profanely and wickedly" usurped Christian lands.¹³⁴ Christendom perceived this land as sacred since it was the land where Christ walked on earth and "appeared to men" a land made "glorious by his miracles" and "holy by his blood".¹³⁵ The significance of a Christian presence in the holy land "where paganism now rules" was viewed as imperative since it was believed that God intended the crusade to do more than "merely to liberate one city, but to scatter the seeds that will grow long and far against the madness of the Antichrist."¹³⁶ Some Christian

¹²⁹ See also Bernard's writings, Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 462.

¹³⁰ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 91.

¹³¹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 103

¹³² Daniel G. König, "Medieval Western European Perceptions of the Islamic World: From 'Active Othering' to 'the Voices in Between'," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 4, 1200-1350, ed. David Thomas and Alex Mallett (Brill, 2012), 24.

¹³³ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 89.

¹³⁴ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 107-8.

¹³⁵ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 461.

¹³⁶ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 143.

writers believed that the end of the world was close. Guibert perceived “the nearness of the time of the Antichrist” which made the Crusade all the more significant.¹³⁷ Christian control of the Holy Land was considered a necessary prophetic component for the end of the age. The Crusades embodied aspects of this awaited final battle, polarizing the two combatants as the evil pagan and the good Christian. Guibert stated how “according to the prophecies” it was necessary for a renewal of Christianity to occur “in those parts” where Christianity originated, as Christian people were vital to resisting the evil of the Antichrist during the end of days.¹³⁸ The battlelines against evil, however, were not drawn up against the Antichrist alone, but also his army of “anti-christians”, the pagan Muslim.¹³⁹

Bernard connects Muslim attacks against the Christian Kingdom in Jerusalem with the work of the devil: the presence of Saracen armies in the Holy City was like the lifting of Satan’s “sacrilegious head”, the “enemy of the Cross”.¹⁴⁰ The devil used the Muslims as “his vessels of wrath” to defile the holy places so that there could be “no sign or trace of piety left”.¹⁴¹ Guibert writes that the Saracens were intent on defiling the holy places of the “Christian Religion”, having cast “their greedy eyes especially on the holy sanctuaries” and perceives that “they long particularly to violate the couch on which, for our sakes, the Lord of our life fell asleep in death.”¹⁴² Ralph of Caen furthers this perception of wickedness with his description of the Turks’ language as “some devilish word”.¹⁴³

Vengeance against this evil is also a theme that appears in Christian writings. The crimes of the Muslim against Christians needed to be punished. In his address to the English people as part of his preaching of the Second Crusade, Bernard encourages his listeners to battle “for your Christian name” so that they may “take vengeance on the heathen”.¹⁴⁴ A divine retribution was being delivered by the hands of the Crusaders. The mass killing of pagans was recompense by God who “repaid them who had inflicted such pain and death upon the pilgrims”; the retribution

¹³⁷ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 43-4.

¹³⁸ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 43-4.

¹³⁹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 43.

¹⁴⁰ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 461.

¹⁴¹ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 462.

¹⁴² Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 461.

¹⁴³ Ralph of Caen, *The Gesta Tancredi*, 18.

¹⁴⁴ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 462.

was “equal to their hideous crimes” which they had visited upon Christians.¹⁴⁵ Only God could know the extent of Christian suffering at the “hands of arrogant Gentiles”¹⁴⁶ where labours were endured by “all those who sought the Holy Places”.¹⁴⁷ The Crusaders were battling against evil: “they consume the evil-doers in battle as though they were straw”.¹⁴⁸ William described the Crusaders’ enemies as those who were “destined to burn forever, as straw for everlasting flames.”¹⁴⁹

Pagans who refused to be brought into Christianity were “the wicked” who were “worthy of vengeful destruction”.¹⁵⁰ The Crusaders are conversely praiseworthy for placing themselves in “exile beyond the Latin world...in order to destroy the enemies of the name of Christ”.¹⁵¹ During the siege of Jerusalem, Guibert describes the “pious” Christian king as battling the “impious ones.”¹⁵² Christian worshippers are “the humble worshippers of God” and “praiseworthy for their devout piety”, contrasting with the pagans who had despoiled God’s holy places “with their impious acts.”¹⁵³ The impiety of pagan Muslims reaffirmed the righteous nature of Christianity.

The Muslims were also so devoid of piety that they exuded spiritual uncleanness, defiling their environment with filth. Those who took paganism upon themselves, according to Guibert, were like “those who fall in the mud and get muddier.”¹⁵⁴ The same sense of uncleanness appears in Matthew’s description of apostates who deserted during a siege to join the Saracen army as adhering “to their filthiness”.¹⁵⁵ The Muslims polluted the region of the East, ruling over Christians and “for their own pleasures have wallowed in the troughs of every kind of filth”.¹⁵⁶ William regarded the churches of the East as particularly holy, being “the last resting place of the sleeping Lord” but under pagan rule they had become “desecrated by the filth of those who have

¹⁴⁵ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 132.

¹⁴⁶ The words pagan and Gentiles appear to be used here interchangeably.

¹⁴⁷ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 132.

¹⁴⁸ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 143.

¹⁴⁹ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 90.

¹⁵⁰ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 143.

¹⁵¹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 28.

¹⁵² Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 162.

¹⁵³ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 296.

¹⁵⁴ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 31.

¹⁵⁵ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 33; Paris, *Matthew Paris’s English History vol.2*, 343.

¹⁵⁶ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 44.

no part in the resurrection”.¹⁵⁷ Part of Pope Urban II’s speech, according to Guibert, urged the liberation of the holy places “which have been polluted by the thick crowd of pagans.”¹⁵⁸ Guibert saw the mere presence of paganism to be religiously defiling and filthy when he perceived the Holy Tomb as delivered “into profane hands.”¹⁵⁹ Ralph mentions a statue of Muhammad discovered and destroyed by the Crusades as “vile” despite the precious materials it was made from.¹⁶⁰

Beyond their contaminating presence, Christian writers also regarded Muslim actions to be filthy. Both William and Guibert include similar stories concerning the sacrilegious treatment of holy Christian sites which made them unclean. When the Crusaders liberated Antioch, the Christians drove out “the pagans who had contaminated the holy temple of God” by turning it into “a house of their Mahomet.”¹⁶¹ Guibert writes how “after Christianity was driven out, the churches which the pagans held had been turned into stables for horses, mules, and other animals.”¹⁶² The presence of animals defiled the holy places in a similar way that the presence of the pagans themselves was seen to be defiling. The taint caused by the pagans was worse, however, as they introduced greater sacrilege, turning places intended for Christian worship to worse uses: “they had set up in them temples, which they called Mahomeries, and they carried out all kinds of filthy activity in them, so that they had become not cathedrals, but brothels and theatres.”¹⁶³ William also writes “they had thrown down the altars and defiled the sanctuary of God”.¹⁶⁴ Those responsible deserved punishment for their desecration of the “venerable places”.¹⁶⁵ The Turks desecrated the portraits of revered saints, having “erased from the very walls” their images or despoiled them in “their rage”, having “gougged out eyes mutilated noses, and daubed the pictures with mud and filth”.¹⁶⁶ The army of Christian Crusaders could “cleanse

¹⁵⁷ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 90.

¹⁵⁸ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 43.

¹⁵⁹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 132.

¹⁶⁰ Ralph of Caen, *The Gesta Tancredi*, 144.

¹⁶¹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 112; See also William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 296.

¹⁶² Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 37.

¹⁶³ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 36-7.

¹⁶⁴ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 296.

¹⁶⁵ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 296.

¹⁶⁶ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 296.

the holiness of the city and the glory of the tomb”.¹⁶⁷ Bernard writes that in the previous Crusade “these holy precincts were cleansed of pagan filth by the sword of our father”.¹⁶⁸

Besides introducing animals and filth into sacred places, Saracens were often compared to animals in order to magnify their polluting presence. William refers to the enemy as “dogs” whose entry into the holy places had “profaned” the sanctuary of God.”¹⁶⁹ Similarly in a letter to the English people preaching the Second Crusade, Bernard admonishes potential recruits to the Crusade who by standing idle “cast holy things to dogs, pearls before swine”. The pagan enemies are the swine and dogs of scripture who “defile the holy places” with their presence, and the Crusaders needed to seek pardon for their sins and cleanse the holy places from “pagan filth”.¹⁷⁰ Ralph of Caen describes Turkish war cries and speech with unintelligible, animalistic sounds as they all at once “howl and gabble and shout”.¹⁷¹

This animal motif is expanded upon by Guibert who regarded the sexuality of the Crusaders’ enemies as being more akin to animal behaviour. They committed acts of unnatural sexual unions that went “beyond the appetites of beasts, by resorting to multiple whores”.¹⁷² On the battlefield, they are “savage people” and like animals to be slain: “the wretched army ran in all directions; the Arabs ran like rabbits”, the Crusaders had hardly enough swords for the slaughter.¹⁷³ The dehumanizing of Muslims is taken further when Guibert describes the “infidel” groups who were recruited into the pagan army, as “by no means human, but monsters.”¹⁷⁴ William praises the piety of the Christian Byzantine Emperor for fighting “against the monstrous race of the Turks and their wicked leader”.¹⁷⁵ These dehumanizing associations with animals and monsters further served to contrast with the Crusaders as God’s people.

¹⁶⁷ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 43.

¹⁶⁸ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 461.

¹⁶⁹ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 90.

¹⁷⁰ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 461.

¹⁷¹ Ralph of Caen, *The Gesta Tancredi*, 18.

¹⁷² Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 34-5.

¹⁷³ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 67.

¹⁷⁴ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 94.

¹⁷⁵ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 296, 414.

The Muslim threat to Christianity

The many negative attributes given to Muslims built them up as a dangerous Other. The villainy of the Muslim was not limited though to their behaviour in Christian holy sites, but was directed against all “the people of God”. This necessitated a defence of the true faith.¹⁷⁶ Norman Housley notes how the Muslims were already viewed before 1095 as a threat to Christendom, especially because of their presence in the Iberian Peninsula.¹⁷⁷ The ill treatment of Christians by Muslim hands had already been a subject in Christian writings and was treated as an attack against Christianity as a whole. Stories about Saracen attacks against Christian churches had circulated since the seventh century making Muslims into anti-God followers of the devil.¹⁷⁸ To Christian writers, the Crusade was justified action because the enemy had driven out of the “servants of Christ” from their lands, and murdered Christian peoples. Said observes how it was not for nothing that Islam came to symbolize “terror, devastation, the demonic, horde of hated barbarians. For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma.”¹⁷⁹ The Crusaders were to liberate Christian people and places “from such abasement” where God would work through them in order to “restore the faith in...eastern lands”.¹⁸⁰

The attacks upon Christian people were an incitement to a holy war. Crusader narratives of holy war repeatedly attributed anti-Christian intentions to their enemies. Guibert’s depiction of Kherboga is representative of the enemy the Crusaders set out to defeat. He is contemptuous of Christianity, who when offered conversion answered: “not only do we refuse to accept the name of Christians, but we spit upon it in disgust.”¹⁸¹ According to Bartlett, non-Christians could be characterized by their hostility to the name of Christianity; Muslim contempt of Christianity validated the First Crusade’s objective. Harking back to the perceived battle between paganism and Christianity, William frames the Muslims as those who were “determined to destroy the Christian name”.¹⁸² “Pious battles” had to be fought against the pagan enemy so that “the name

¹⁷⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 467-8.

¹⁷⁷ Norman Housley, *Contesting the Crusades* (Blackwell, 2007), 160.

¹⁷⁸ Beaumont, “Early Christian Attitudes towards Islam,” 107.

¹⁷⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 59.

¹⁸⁰ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 43-4.

¹⁸¹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 108.

¹⁸² Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 251; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 92, 394; Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 462.

of Catholicism will be propagated” and the Holy Land restored to Christian hands.¹⁸³ Despite this hostility, there were levels of co-existence between eastern Christians and Muslims. William describes how the equal dividing of power and taxes between Christians and “infidels” had been the custom “for many years” in certain cities in the East.¹⁸⁴ The Muslim leader Nur ad-Din, is described by William as “a mighty persecutor of the Christian name and faith”, alongside positive remarks concerning his wisdom, bravery and “according to the traditions of his race, a religious man”, since he could not have been regarded as religious by Christian standards.¹⁸⁵

William’s version of Pope Urban’s speech includes an account of the heinous deeds done to Christians in the East: they had been forced to “shrink back in horror from the impious commands of the infidels” who required them to blaspheme against God or be killed. Even the pious priests were slain to “become companions of the holy martyrs.”¹⁸⁶ Their brutal attacks were specifically aimed against Christians which made them “enemies of Christ” and “evil”.¹⁸⁷ Violence against Christian figures of authority marks these enemies as particularly depraved in their attacks against Christianity as Guibert remarks how a bishop was killed after having first been the target of sexual assault.¹⁸⁸

William recounts the story of persecution of Christians living in the “midst of infidels” whose “abominable wickedness” led them to plan that “all Christians living in Antioch should be put to death secretly by night.” With the help of “a friend to the Christians” this “wicked plot” had been discovered: without its prevention “the whole body of Christians would have perished by the sword”.¹⁸⁹ After the Crusaders had taken the city of Antioch, they found “in the homes of the Christians many infidels who had come, as ordered, to massacre the unsuspecting believers.”¹⁹⁰ The Crusaders were thus heroes who successfully protected Christians from a wicked people intent on destroying them. Elsewhere a “wicked man, who persecuted our people with insatiable hatred” desecrated a local holy site and the populace determined “without question” that the Christians were responsible for the sacrilegious act. This act of desecration mirrors what

¹⁸³ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 43.

¹⁸⁴ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 470.

¹⁸⁵ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 394.

¹⁸⁶ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 90.

¹⁸⁷ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 84, 111.

¹⁸⁸ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 37.

¹⁸⁹ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 253.

¹⁹⁰ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 253.

Christian writers accuse the “infidels” of doing to Christian holy sites. Consequently, “death was decreed for all Christians”, though this was prevented when a young man took the blame for the crime so that “the whole Christian race may not perish”, and was put to death to save “the entire church” from the “massacre”. This sacrifice reflects the call to Crusade which was preached by the pope as a form of martyrdom. The non-Christian people were depicted as notably eager to severely persecute the Christian population, and even contrived to find causes to do so.¹⁹¹

Christians who suffered under Saracen rule were “forbidden to observe the religious rites which, under their various masters, they had been free to practice, both openly and in secret.”¹⁹² The Christian populations were “forced to remain within their own houses” and were attacked within their homes as “the enemy threw stones and filth ... upon them”. The Christian feast days provoked the Saracens “for the slightest trivial word” and “at the demand of any chance accuser, they were dragged away to punishment and torture, without due process of law”.¹⁹³ These enemies then confiscated Christian goods, and stole their possessions. In these instances, the ‘Saracens’ became a group who collectively sought to destroy Christianity as a whole.

The Muslim threat to Christianity was also emphasized by their incessant desire to make Christians renounce their faith. This became a fitting justification for the purpose of the Crusade as a pilgrimage, and as a test in which Crusaders would purify their own faith. William writes that Christians were “compelled to serve the uncleanness of the Gentiles” and were also forced by the infidels “to deny the name of the Living God, and to blaspheme with sacrilegious lips.”¹⁹⁴ Christians had their sons and daughters “snatched away from home and forced, either by the lash or by soft words and promises, to forswear their faith or to suffer on the gibbet.”¹⁹⁵ According to Guibert, Kherboga asked the Christian delegation to “become like us and renounce the Christ upon whom you seem to rely.” He offered the Christians the Holy Land and a “land of greater wealth and size” which included castles, titles and cities if they acquiesced. If they refused they would become slaves and “die horribly”, (Guibert here evoking the death of saints and martyrs).¹⁹⁶ No specifics are given regarding the alternate faith, which is used merely as a vague,

¹⁹¹ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 68.

¹⁹² William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 67.

¹⁹³ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 67.

¹⁹⁴ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 90.

¹⁹⁵ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 67.

¹⁹⁶ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 108.

errant belief to tempt conversion and to test the strength of Christian faith. Guibert reports that he had heard of many who had been captured by the pagans and were “ordered to deny the sacraments of faith” but instead “preferred to expose their heads to the sword than to betray the Christian faith.”¹⁹⁷ A knight was “captured by the pagans”, and these gentiles “in their madness” then “demanded that he renounce the Christian faith”.¹⁹⁸ The knight’s refusal to convert made him a “praiseworthy man”. By “dying to preserve the confession of his faith”, this man was “a martyr who would be known for ages to come”.¹⁹⁹ Such vilification of Muslims served to justify the liberation of the Holy City by the Crusaders.²⁰⁰

The Crusades became part of a spiritual narrative that claimed Christian ownership over divine truth which defended Christian identity. As God’s chosen, Crusader successes were proof of God’s favour and of Muslim religious illegitimacy. Guibert writes how during a battle, the enemy attempted to set fire to the Crusaders’ ballistic machine, but “God thwarted their plan”.²⁰¹ The losses experienced by the Muslims served to delegitimize their claims to divine favour, and Crusader successes proved the exclusivity of Christianity to divine revelation. Before a battle, the priests and clerics “prayed that God intervene by reducing the strength of the pagans” and also increase “the strength of those who fought for the true faith.”²⁰² The Crusaders were “absolutely certain” that their enemy could not win their “war against God.”²⁰³ Material success became the criterion of divine justification.²⁰⁴ Christian defeats were viewed as God’s divine punishment for their sinfulness, which turned Muslims into tools which God used to punish “His people”.²⁰⁵ The occupation of the Holy Land by pagans was interpreted to be a punishment sent by God due to general Christian sin, and did not indicate a divine rejection. In Pope Urban’s speech, according to both Bernard and William, “the Holy City, beloved of God, was subjected to the domination of unbelieving enemies, because of our sins”.²⁰⁶ Saracen victories were even part of God’s plan: Guibert writes that according to the Gospel, Jerusalem would be “trodden

¹⁹⁷ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 89.

¹⁹⁸ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 89.

¹⁹⁹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 165.

²⁰⁰ Tolan, “Muslims as Pagan Idolaters”, 100.

²⁰¹ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 116-7.

²⁰² Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 117.

²⁰³ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos*, 107-8.

²⁰⁴ Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 156-7.

²⁰⁵ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 461.

²⁰⁶ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 63-4; Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 461.

down by the Gentiles, until the time of the nations will be fulfilled". The Saracens' time of authority over Jerusalem would be limited until the time "when, with the aid of God, the power of the pagans will be pushed back".²⁰⁷ Ultimately, worldly success counted for little since Christianity had victory in eternity while other nations wrought "eternal shame".²⁰⁸

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on identifying Christian narratives which may be interpreted as imagining the Muslim as Other. These were not the generalized binary of East and West as Said claimed. Rather, Christian writers had specific negative images of the Muslim Other which were built up during the medieval period. As Akbari writes, analysis of these specific images in context helps towards a fuller understanding of the processes that led to differentiations made between peoples and the nuances in these processes. As Goetz and Woods write, the mere detection of differentiation is not enough: we need to explore the reasons behind its creation.

Christian writers did distinguish between a superior Christian Self and an inferior Muslim Other. The strength and perceived threat of Islam to Christendom created an impetus for developing negative images about it. These images were highly influenced by preconceptions regarding the East, which were utilized to characterize Muslims as the embodiments of these negative qualities. The East was inhabited by barbarous and God-less people, backwards in knowledge, and prone to unbelief and extreme vices such as unrestrained lusts. These stereotypes were used to construct the Saracen Other. As people from the East, Muslims were seen as weak of mind and spirit, easily tricked into believing in heresy. These were traits that the majority of people in Christendom were perceived to be innately without. Similarly, Muhammad, as the key-figure in Islam, became the embodiment of these negative traits. He was further utilized as a contrast to Christ, a false prophet whose doctrines were derived from satanic origins. His denigration served to reinforce the superiority of Christianity over Islam. Muslim association with paganism, polytheistic beliefs and filth was the antithesis of monotheistic Christianity. Muslims were regarded with such repugnance to Christianity that they were believed to exude a spiritual

²⁰⁷ Luke 21:24

²⁰⁸ Guibert, *Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos*, 105-6; Tolan, *Saracens*, xx.

pollution. The tendency to ascribe beastlike characteristics to their enemies achieved a greater sense of the Other.

The Crusades enhanced these essentialist narratives; preaching for holy war exacerbated negative perceptions. Muslims represented a mirror image of the Christian Self. Ultimately, to assist the purposes of the Crusades, it was necessary to establish the Muslim as an anti-Christian enemy. Negative myths about Muslim beliefs within Christendom reaffirmed Christian superiority. The generalized and fictional pagan-Saracen belief as Christianity's moral opposite served to unify the physical and theological response to Islam. Muslim immorality, under satanic influence, manifested itself in crimes which sought the end of Christianity through conversion or slaughter. Muslims also became objectified tools of the divine to explain away Christian defeats as temporary chastisements from God for sinfulness. By the thirteenth century, writers such as Matthew Paris had a well-established notion of the Muslim Other, and continued to propagate an image nurtured by crusading conflict. Thus, the abundance of these writings reveals how much Christendom's Self-identity was shaped by the dynamic presence of the Muslim Other. The superiority in the piety of Christendom was preserved by medieval writers' use of the impious Muslim Other. During the period of the Crusades, the Muslim Other came to be mirrored even more sharply. The culmination of the negative image of the Other shaped not only the history of the East but Christendom also, cementing a dichotomist commentary into memory which would last beyond the contexts which originally intensified it.

Chapter Three: Muslim perspectives on Christians

Introduction

Western scholarship has tended not to recognize that the Muslim East has had its own tradition of alterity.¹ Modern historiography, though, has viewed Islam as the dominant power in the medieval world.² A Muslim sense of cultural superiority is evident in Muslim texts. The Islamic claim to exclusive universal truth, given its monotheism, deemed other revelations as inferior, and those who subscribed to them, in effect, as Others.³ In recognition of this, some of Edward Said's arguments on Orientalism may be applicable to the Muslim writers of this time. Scholars have noticed Said's neglect of the Orient's practice of alterity, and his analysis of Orientalism has been described as one-sided, depriving the Other of their voice.⁴ Hermes observes that the Oriental has not existed solely to be "Orientalized" but has always participated in othering, and the East has had its own contrasting Occident.⁵ It is therefore important to balance the Christian view of the East with the Muslim view of the West.

Scholarship on Muslim perceptions, especially before the Crusades, has been to a degree neglected in favour of the dominant Crusader perspective.⁶ Writers such as Tolan, however, have attempted to provide a Muslim viewpoint. As discussed above, in the Middle Ages the Self and the Other were shaped primarily by religious identity.⁷ According to Moreno, religious affiliation to one of the novel forms of monotheism became one of the main expressions of identity.⁸ This is especially true of the Muslim perspective, as Christie notes that Muslim writers were usually religiously trained scholars who wrote through a lens of faith, which influenced the tone of their

¹ Hermes, *The [European] Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture*, 5.

² Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 9.

³ Eduardo Manzano Moreno, "Assimilating 'Otherness' in Early Islam" in *'Otherness' in the Middle Ages*, ed. Goetz and Wood (Brepols Publishers, 2021), 248; Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, 162.

⁴ Schaller, "Crusader Orientalism," 3; Hermes, *The [European] Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture*, 5.

⁵ Hermes, *The [European] Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture*, 8.

⁶ Hermes, *The [European] Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture*, 4.

⁷ Tolan, *Saracens*, 4. See Introduction.

⁸ Moreno, "Assimilating 'Otherness' in Early Islam", 234.

writings.⁹ Parallel to this, Hillenbrand notes the significance of religion in defining the Otherness of the Crusaders and the way it was used to reinforce distinction between Muslims and Christians.¹⁰ Muslims had their own ways to categorize non-Muslims which were mostly framed in terms of religious virtue. When Muslims were victorious over the Crusaders in battle, it was largely seen in a religious rather than ethnic light and interpreted as the superiority of one religion over the other.¹¹ This chapter explores Muslim writers' perceptions of Christians and what influences the Christian Other had on Muslim identity.

As discussed in the Introduction, the majority of Muslim sources consist of Damascene religious scholars. The first is *'Ali ibn Tahir al-Sulami* who wrote the *Kitab al-Jihad*, a predominately religious work of propaganda. Since his work was largely ignored when it was composed orally in 1105 to call fellow Muslims to engage in *jihad* against the Crusaders, it is not representative of the views of that time. However, his work had influence upon later Muslims, and provides insight into how invading Crusaders were seen by Muslim religious scholars at the time. The second Damascene is *Ibn al-Qalanisi* whose chronicle *Dhayl Ta'rikh Dimashq* consists of events surrounding the city of Damascus. This limits its scope, while also providing valuable attitudes and insight into the First Crusade. The only non-Damascene source was written by *Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Jubayr al-Kinani* (1145-1217) who offers a richly detailed travel diary documenting his journey through Christian controlled regions in the Holy Land and provides a perspective of an *Al-Andalus* Muslim. He gives a variety of positive and negative remarks concerning Christians and Muslims he encounters during his travels.

Muslim perspective towards Christians

Muslim views of Christians from distant lands were partly derived from the idea that identity was shaped by geography rather than ethnicity. Muslim geographers divided the world into specific 'climes' which predisposed the resident race of a particular clime towards certain

⁹ Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, 15; Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 32.

¹⁰ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 282.

¹¹ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 301.

attributes.¹² The Arabic term *Ifranj*, which translates as ‘Franks’, was used to refer to people who dwelled in the territories of Charlemagne’s Empire during the ninth century. The people of the clime of Western Europe were regarded by many Muslim writers as barbarians who were predisposed to violence and savagery.¹³ Similarly, Al-Sulami describes anyone who spoke a different language from Arabic as “a barbarian.”¹⁴ The Muslim writers’ use of generalizing terminology to refer to the invading Crusaders suggests that this designation existed before the First Crusade.¹⁵ Muslims already had an established general image of what and who a Frank was which Muslim writers did not need to explain to their audiences.¹⁶

The Muslim practice of alterity was significantly concerned with religious affiliation. Though Muslim writers distinguished between the Crusading Franks and the Byzantines, who were called *Rum*,¹⁷ they did not distinguish between variations within Christianity and largely saw the Crusaders and the Byzantines as sharing exactly the same religion.¹⁸ Ibn al-Qalanisi writes how the Muslims at Antioch set about fortifying it against the Crusaders and expelled “its Christian population”, despite their lack of affiliation with the Crusaders’ purpose.¹⁹ This generalization of non-Muslims is reminiscent of Said’s Orientalism, insofar as Muslim writers placed diverse groups of people within the one category of ‘Christian’ thus giving the impression of a collective identity.²⁰ Bernard Lewis argues that the lack of attempt to distinguish differences was due to the absence of curiosity towards an inferior culture, region and religion.²¹ Hillenbrand adds that Muslims generally had little interest in Christianity since it was perceived to be an inferior revelation.²² However, despite a lack of precision, Muslim writers did perceive some differences concerning Christianity in both its far and near forms. Ibn al-Qalanisi differentiates between Christian populations in an instance where the local Armenian Christians surrendered to the

¹² Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, 14, 60; Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 102-3; Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 270.

¹³ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 268, 270.

¹⁴ Al-Sulami, *The Book of the Jihad*, trans. Niall Christie (Routledge, 2016), 339.

¹⁵ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 268, 273.

¹⁶ See use of Franks: Al-Sulami, 208, Ibn al-Qalanisi, 41, 45.

¹⁷ Al-Sulami, *The Book of the Jihad*, 335; Muhammad Ibn-Ahmad Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr: Being the Chronicle of a Mediaeval Spanish Moor Concerning his Journey to the Egypt of Saladin, the Holy Cities of Arabia, Baghdad the City of the Caliphs, the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, and the Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, trans. R. J. C. Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr* (The Camelot Press Ltd, 1952), 367.

¹⁸ Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, 4.

¹⁹ Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, trans. H.A.R. Gibb (Luzac & Co., 1932), 42.

²⁰ Said, *Orientalism*, xxii.

²¹ Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (Oxford University Press, 1993), 13.

²² Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 267-8, 303.

Muslims due to “the injustice and grievous tyranny which they suffered from the Franks”.²³ The *Rum* were considered by Muslim writers to be the traditional enemies of Islam.²⁴ After resisting repeated Muslim attacks, it was believed that Byzantium would one day fall to Islam.²⁵ After Jerusalem fell to the Crusaders, al-Sulami wrote how this event was prophesized to occur, and would serve as the sign that the time was right to take the Christian capital of Constantinople where they would “descend on it and conquer it”.²⁶ Indeed, Hermes argues how the *Ifranġ* would come to replace the *Rum* as the Muslims’ primary Christian enemy and Other.²⁷

People of the Book

Muslim writers’ attitudes towards Christianity encompassed a complex range of extremes from tolerance to intolerance. Christians were part of a distinct group along with other monotheists, for their religious commonalities and Abrahamic roots, designated as ‘People of the Book’²⁸ who were assured the right to practice their religion.²⁹ Islam revered many of the same religious figures Christians did, such as Moses, David and Jesus, which gave Christians a better status than the pagans of other nations. This common heritage granted Christianity a level of respect, as the Qur’ān addresses these people of scripture stating how Muslims “believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one.”³⁰ Muhammad preached tolerance and protection for those who entered into a covenant with Islam, and this was generally followed by Muslim communities.³¹

However, Christians were not always regarded with this spirit of co-existence. The tolerated status of their faith contributed to the perception of them as Other. ‘The Pact of Umar’ represents a more intolerant perspective towards the ‘People of the Book’. Christians under Muslim rule were categorized as *dhimmīs*, a protected people, which designated them as non-Muslim and

²³ Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, 69.

²⁴ Hermes, *The [European] Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture*, 137.

²⁵ Tolan, “Muslims as Pagan Idolaters,” 39.

²⁶ Al-Sulami, *The Book of the Jihad*, 218.

²⁷ Hermes, *The [European] Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture*, 154.

²⁸ *Ahl al-kitab*.

²⁹ Tolan, “Muslims as Pagan Idolaters,” 33.

³⁰ Surah Al-Ankabut Ayat, 46.

³¹ Covenant, *dhimmi*: Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 408.

implied inferior connotations. The pact set out rules for *dhimmīs* which they and Muslims alike ideally abided by in their everyday life.³² Under the pact, Christians were restricted within Muslim communities (*umma*) such as in the public display of their religion. Their manner of dress and appearance also could not resemble that of a Muslim, and they were required to wear a *zunnar* (belt), to distinguish them as non-Muslim.³³ Hillenbrand argues that although many Muslim writers disapproved of Christian and Muslim intermingling and sought stricter rules, the pact was likely rarely enforced in everyday life.³⁴ The requirement of Christians to physically show they were different was evidence of Muslims' low regard for them, and in effect made them an Other in Muslim society.³⁵ Aman Nadhiri describes this as a process of bringing the Other near in order to categorize it while simultaneously keeping it at the edges of society.³⁶ Muslim writers used the Christian Other to prove their Muslim identity as superior. By keeping the obsolete predecessor of religious truth nearby and intact, Muslim writers could better show the superiority of Islam.

The inferior status of *dhimmis* showed Muslim dominance and material success. Tolan observes how Muslims showed superiority over Christianity by marking it as the inferior religion through the submission of Christians to the Muslim yoke, never to be considered as equal to Muslims, which also represented their secondary status in the eyes of God.³⁷ Post-colonial theorists such as Homi Bhabha argue that in order to maintain the essentialized 'purity' and superiority of one culture over another, there is a crucial need to recognize and preserve a sense of difference.³⁸ The *dhimmi* status of Christians was "a sign of inferiority" imposed upon them by the true religion, while guarding Muslims against grey areas of 'ambivalence'.³⁹ Islam also had internal heretics to Other which served to solidify their religious identity. At times their conflict with internal

³² Milka Levy-Rubin, "The Pact of 'Umar," in *Routledge Handbook on Christian-Muslim Relations*, ed. David Thomas (Routledge, 2017), 85.

³³ Moreno, "Assimilating 'Otherness' in Early Islam", 241; David Thomas, "Christians Under Muslim Rule, 650–1200: Christians in the Muslim Arab World," in *Routledge Handbook on Christian-Muslim Relations*, ed. David Thomas (Routledge, 2017), 70.

³⁴ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 409-10.

³⁵ Thomas, "Christians Under Muslim Rule," 70.

³⁶ Nadhiri, *Saracens and Franks*, 195.

³⁷ Tolan, "Muslims as Pagan Idolaters," 21, 39.

³⁸ Homi K. Bhabha, "Of mimicry and man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *Literary Theory and Criticism*, 130; Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 55.

³⁹ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 114.

enemies was prioritized over their conflict with Christian kingdoms, such as the *Rum*.⁴⁰ This conflict against internal Others potentially brought war with Christians. One of the impetuses for the Crusades came from an appeal from the Byzantine Emperor Alexius I for aid against Muslim Seljuk Turks. This was due to their war against internal Muslim ‘heretics’ which had contributed to their advance through Asia Minor, threatening the Byzantine capital of Constantinople.⁴¹

Muslims supported by God

Muslim writers had ready proof of their dominant status in their worldly successes. Muslims had been rewarded by God for their faithful service with dominion over the earth.⁴² They saw God’s divine support as evidence for Islam’s superiority, and wrote extensively concerning the truth of their religion being manifested in their military victories. Muslim writers considered their understanding of God’s commands to be superior to that of the Crusaders.⁴³ Al-Sulami, for instance, writes that Muslims were the ones who had been chosen to undertake this “struggle for God in the due of His *jihad*”: “He chose you and did not impose any distress upon you in religion.”⁴⁴ Ibn Jubayr⁴⁵ was used to close contact with Christians in Muslim Al-Andalus.⁴⁶ On his journey through the Crusader kingdom, he regarded the Maghribi prisoners as “God’s servants the Muslims” who had “no other to deliver them”.⁴⁷ However, the “beneficent work of God most High towards these Maghribi people” was evident through the efforts of wealthy Muslims to rescue them, proving that God actively and physically took care of his faithful people.⁴⁸

Muslim writers had a well-established confidence in the rightness of their religion and perceived the military success of early Islam against two powerful empires as evidence for God’s favour

⁴⁰ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 33.

⁴¹ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History* (Bloomsbury, 2014), 21; Christopher Tyerman, *The Crusades: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 12; Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, 12-15; Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 33-6, 47.

⁴² Tolan, “Muslims as Pagan Idolaters”, 39.

⁴³ Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, 77.

⁴⁴ Al-Sulami, *The Book of the Jihad*, 376.

⁴⁵ Abū l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Jubayr al-Kinānī.

⁴⁶ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 262.

⁴⁷ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 322.

⁴⁸ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 323.

for their creed over that of Judaism and Christianity.⁴⁹ Debates between religions were viewed by Muslims through this lens, which lent their arguments a sense of triumph in reality since they could point to worldly success as divine evidence while other religions could not. The military success during the Crusades reinforced this perception of religious superiority, enhancing Muslim identity in relation to the inferior and defeated Crusaders. Ibn al-Qalanisi wrote how a particular victory against the Crusaders at Antioch “was one of the finest of victories and such plenitude of divine aid was never granted to Islam in all its past ages”.⁵⁰

Hillenbrand observes that medieval Muslims felt condescension towards Christians, perceiving their own culture as superior.⁵¹ Al-Sulami attributed Crusader victories as a matter of Muslims’ “dispersed unity” and reluctance “to engage in combat” which resulted in the Crusaders’ conquering “more than their greatest hopes had conceived”, and this provided a ready reason for their apparent superiority in battle, and also suggests that only disunity among Muslims enabled Crusader successes.⁵²

Ibn al-Qalanisi saw Islam as having God’s blessing.⁵³ God was seen to fight in favour of the Muslims. He proclaimed “God Most High succoured the Muslims” against their enemies, and elsewhere wrote how “God gave victory to the Muslims over their enemy.”⁵⁴ Al-Sulami, promoted the idea that God “is our refuge and support in harm and distress” and that there was “no success for us all except with God”.⁵⁵ Al-Sulami stressed this point in order to convey to his audience that if the Muslims were faithful, God “will assist you and make your footsteps firm”, and even if their enemies were “to cover the earth and his troops to suffocate the sky” the victorious conqueror is the one who “God makes steadfast.”⁵⁶ Faithful Muslims who fought are assured of “the reward that God, be He praised, and His Prophet promised to whoever fought the *jihad* in His cause” and also if they die in battle while waging *jihad* they “will be with God among the martyrs”.⁵⁷ Ibn al-Qalanisi also mentions how “the prize of martyrdom” could be

⁴⁹ Tolan, “Muslims as Pagan Idolaters”, 21, 36.

⁵⁰ Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, 160-1.

⁵¹ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 268.

⁵² Al-Sulami, *The Book of the Jihad*, 206-7.

⁵³ Tolan, *Saracens*, 21.

⁵⁴ Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, 49-50, 60.

⁵⁵ Al-Sulami, *The Book of the Jihad*, 237.

⁵⁶ Al-Sulami, *The Book of the Jihad*, 237, 371.

⁵⁷ Al-Sulami, *The Book of the Jihad*, 208, 237.

attained when the faithful fell in battle.⁵⁸ Faithful Muslims were worthy people in God's eyes and deserving of a special place after death for their obedience in carrying out God's will.

Enemies of God: infidels

Muslim intolerance of Christians is most apparent when they were labelled the "enemies of God".⁵⁹ Although Muslims recognized that Christians and Jews would have their own place in heaven, Christians could also be called pagan unbelievers.⁶⁰ The term infidel, *kafir*, was a label placed on those outside of the Muslim world.⁶¹ It was used frequently to denote the invading Christian army and used to highlight religious differences between Christians and Muslims. Ibn al-Qalanisi describes the Crusaders as "infidels" in letters that were sent to the leader of Damascus, Zahir al-Din Atabek, asking for "his assistance and support to the waging of the Holy War against the infidels".⁶² Ibn Jubayr saw the Crusaders as God's enemies, and the Maghribi people as rescued by God "from the hands of His enemies the infidels."⁶³ Hillenbrand suggests that the arrival of the 'new' Christian fanaticism of the Crusades shocked the Muslim world and contributed to the shift away from the prevailing tolerance of Christians living in the Levant prior to 1099.⁶⁴

Crusaders were increasingly cursed by Muslim writers, beginning with Ibn al-Qalanisi, who was the first Muslim writer to use the phrase 'God forsake them' when referring to the Crusaders.⁶⁵ To call down God's curse upon Christians was a clear acknowledgment of their status as enemies of Islam. Al-Sulami identifies the Crusaders as 'the enemy', and elsewhere he calls upon God to "destroy" the Franks.⁶⁶ Ibn al-Qalanisi also refers to the Crusaders as enemies of God by framing

⁵⁸ Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, 54.

⁵⁹ Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, 60.

⁶⁰ Tolan, "Muslims as Pagan Idolaters", 33.

⁶¹ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 303.

⁶² Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, extracted and translated by H.A.R. Gibb (Luzac, 1932), 70-1.

⁶³ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 323.

⁶⁴ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 407, 419.

⁶⁵ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 303. See also 'God-forsaken' Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, 82.

⁶⁶ 'Alī ibn Ṭāhir, Al-Sulami, *The Book of the Jihad*, translation and commentary by Niall Christie (Routledge, 2016), 208.

the conflicts as part of a larger ‘Holy War’. When a couple of amirs decided to join forces, Ibn al-Qalanisi writes how they made “a solemn agreement with one another to prosecute the Holy War against the Crusaders, the enemies of God.”⁶⁷ The Crusaders were also estranged from God by being described as “God-forsaken”.⁶⁸ Muslim writers framed battles against the Crusaders in terms of *jihad*, meaning ‘striving’ in the faith. This included an inner *jihad*, a cleansing of one’s own sinfulness waged against the self, and an outer *jihad*, which involved military activity for the faith.⁶⁹ The Crusaders are seen as the object of *jihad* obligating that battles be fought against them in “pursuit of the duty of His *jihad*”.⁷⁰ Al-Sulami also quotes the Qur’an, explaining that *jihad* was to be waged “so that the word of God will be highest” while “the word of those who blaspheme will be lowest.”⁷¹ The Crusaders may be characterized as ‘those who blaspheme’, and hence al-Sulami categorizes them as the enemies of God.

Inferior knowledge

Muslims regarded the Qur’ān as divinely given to Muhammad serving as God’s final revelation to humanity, superseding Christianity.⁷² The inferior knowledge of Christianity was significant for Muslim identity. Since only one interpretation of a monotheistic God could be correct, Muslims established their possession of superior knowledge.⁷³ Christian teachings were based upon the Bible, a text which was not considered equal to the Qur’ān as a source of God’s revelation.⁷⁴ However, the Bible was recognised by many Muslim writers as a source of authority, which necessitated its refutation in light of the revelation of the Qur’ān as a superior text. According to Burge, critiques of scriptures were a matter of establishing authority.⁷⁵ During

⁶⁷ Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, 60; see also ‘Holy War’, 42, 46, 53, 58, 70. Qur’an, 9: 40; John V. Tolan, “Conquest and its Justifications: Jihad, Crusade, Reconquista,” in *Europe and the Islamic world: A History* (Princeton University Press, 2013), 27.

⁶⁸ Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, 54.

⁶⁹ Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, xxxiii, 3.

⁷⁰ Al-Sulami, *The Book of the Jihad*, 371.

⁷¹ Al-Sulami, *The Book of the Jihad*, 231-232. Qur’an, 9: 40.

⁷² Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 267; Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 394.

⁷³ Stephen R. Burge, “The Theological Dynamics of Medieval Christian–Muslim Relations,” in *Routledge Handbook on Christian-Muslim Relations*, ed. David Thomas (Routledge, 2017), 208.

⁷⁴ David Bertaina, “Early Muslim attitudes towards the Bible,” in *Routledge Handbook on Christian-Muslim Relations*, ed. David Thomas (Routledge, 2017), 99.

⁷⁵ Burge, “The Theological Dynamics of Medieval Christian –Relations”, 208.

the ninth century, translations of the Bible into Arabic had become more available and it was studied for its authoritative qualities to prove Islam and legitimize it as the scripturally based successor to Christianity and Judaism.⁷⁶

By the eleventh century, Muslim regard for the Bible diminished due to the absence of references to Islam, and in particular the foretelling of Muhammad.⁷⁷ To explain these discrepancies and justify the status of the Qur'ān as God's final revelation over Christianity, Muslim writers regarded the Bible as '*tahrif*', corrupt and full of errors due to Christian misinterpretation of the text.⁷⁸ This reaffirmed the Muslim perception that Christians, like Jews, had strayed from the correct and pure expression of monotheistic faith.⁷⁹ Tolan explains how Muslims saw themselves as those who "submitted" to God's will, and have kept the purity of God's religion, the "true religion" through Abraham intact unlike Jews and Christians.⁸⁰ Al-Sulami also includes a quote from the Qur'an identifying Muslims as "submitters to God's will", establishing that they are in a unique and superior position and also implying that they are apart from other peoples who do not submit to God's will.⁸¹ Eventually the Bible was considered unworthy for use in Islamic education.⁸² Biblical texts which had initially shaped the identity of Islam came to influence how Muslims viewed Christianity as an inferior Other.⁸³

Muslim portrayal of Jesus

It was obvious to Muslims that Christians had derived the wrong meaning from their biblical texts and Muslims were in possession of the correct version of religious truth. Closely related to this was how the key figure in Christian doctrine was portrayed. Jesus was viewed with respect as an upholder of Islam and assimilated into the faith. Ibn Jubayr describes a cave in his journey

⁷⁶ David Bertaina, "Early Muslim Attitudes Towards the Bible," in *Routledge Handbook on Christian-Muslim Relations*, ed. David Thomas (Routledge, 2017), 98, 100.

⁷⁷ Bertaina, "Early Muslim Attitudes Towards the Bible", 102.

⁷⁸ Bertaina, "Early Muslim Attitudes Towards the Bible", 98; Sura 7:16, a story concerning the dangers of altering divine words.

⁷⁹ Tolan, "Muslims as Pagan Idolaters", 35.

⁸⁰ Tolan, *Saracens*, xv, 21, 34-5.

⁸¹ Al-Sulami, *The Book of the Jihad*, 258. *Qur'an* 3: 64. Tolan, *Saracens*, 22.

⁸² Bertaina, "Early Muslim Attitudes Towards the Bible", 98, 103.

⁸³ Bertaina, "Early Muslim Attitudes Towards the Bible", 98.

where notable biblical people had prayed such as Abraham, and includes Jesus, whom he asks God to bless alongside Muhammad.⁸⁴ However, Muslims did not acknowledge Jesus as the son of God and saw his veneration as such by Christians to be blasphemous.⁸⁵ As a result, accusations on disparity between the faiths were usually made apart from Jesus. The Christian version of Jesus' message was considered inaccurate, and his claims to divinity were not literal but metaphorical.⁸⁶ Muslims debated amongst themselves that Christians had, intentionally or through error, corrupted the gospel of Jesus.⁸⁷ In the Qur'an, Jesus had not been killed, and it states how his killing "was only made to appear so" and that Christians who argue for the fact of the crucifixion "have no knowledge whatsoever".⁸⁸ Muslims saw no theological necessity for Jesus' death as they did not recognize the central Christian theme of atonement and sacrifice.⁸⁹ This different perception of Jesus coupled with the Christian rejection of Muhammad created a wide theological gulf between these faiths.⁹⁰ In an address to the 'People of the Book', the Qur'an admonishes Christians specifically, making mention of "The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary" and states that he "was no more than a messenger of Allah".⁹¹ The reference to Jesus as the 'son of Mary' emphasizes his humanity, in contrast to the Christian usage of the son of God.⁹² Jesus' title of Messiah is also a hollow one, and does not denote his saviour-hood.⁹³ On his travels, Ibn Jubayr observes "the dwelling of the Messiah and his mother" and denotes "God's blessings upon them both."⁹⁴ Jesus was perceived by many Muslims as preparing the ground for Muhammad's arrival, who was regarded as the ultimate 'seal of the Prophets' with none other expected after him.⁹⁵ It was assumed in Muslim tradition that Christians would

⁸⁴ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 286.

⁸⁵ Peter Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu (The Life Story of Jesus) Revisited: A Princeton Conference* (Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 157; Bertaina, "Early Muslim Attitudes Towards the Bible", 101; Tolan, "Muslims as Pagan Idolaters", 34; Tolan, *Saracens*, 16, 33.; Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, 61.

⁸⁶ Bertaina, "Early Muslim Attitudes Towards the Bible", 101-2.

⁸⁷ Bertaina, "Early Muslim Attitudes Towards the Bible", 102.

⁸⁸ Sura 4:157.

⁸⁹ Burge, "The Theological Dynamics of Medieval Christian -Relations", 208; Thomas, "Christians Under Muslim Rule, 650–1200: Christians in the Muslim Arab World", 72; Sura 4:157.

⁹⁰ Burge, "The Theological Dynamics of Medieval Christian -Relations", 208.

⁹¹ Qur'an 4.171.

⁹² Burge, "The Theological Dynamics of Medieval Christian -Relations", 208; Bertaina, "Early Muslim Attitudes Towards the Bible", 101; 'Isa ibn Maryam (Jesus son of Mary) Jesus is known by a few names and titles in Islam, including Yasū', 'Īsā and al-Masih.

⁹³ Damian Howard, "The Nature of the Human in Contemporary Christian–Muslim Relations," in *Routledge Handbook on Christian-Muslim Relations*, ed. David Thomas (Routledge, 2017), 320.

⁹⁴ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 287.

⁹⁵ Burge, "The Theological Dynamics of Medieval Christian -Relations", 208; Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 267.

someday realize the inferiority of their own religion and convert to Islam upon Jesus' second coming where he was expected to break symbols of the cross and slaughter the swine.⁹⁶

Christianity as Pagan

Christianity was also regarded as a form of polytheism, and treated as inferior for its deviation into idolatry. Early Islam had a history of intolerance towards idol worship and pagans had been forced to convert. Christians were considered, along with Jews, as original custodians of divine truth and were assured freedom of religion.⁹⁷ However, Christianity, along with Judaism, was seen to have deviated from the monotheistic path and its scriptures had been corrupted with misunderstandings that had led to idolatry.⁹⁸ Christians erred theologically on the nature of God by associating Jesus with God. The Qur'an states that "Those who say, 'Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary,' have certainly disbelieved" and that "Whoever associates others with Allah (in worship) is certainly forbidden Paradise by Allah."⁹⁹ Ibn Jubayr had a multitude of positive things to say concerning William II of Sicily, but regarded him as a "polytheist".¹⁰⁰ Concerning Jerusalem under Crusader rule, Ibn Jubayr beseeches God to restore it to the Muslims and cleanse it from "the hands of the polytheists."¹⁰¹ This perception did not relegate Christians into the same classification as idolatrous pagans since they were distinguished as *dhimmīs*, but rather, it served as proof of Christianity's corruption as a religion into polytheism. Muslim writers used this perception of Christianity in order to prove their superiority. On his return voyage, Ibn Jubayr shared his journey with "thousands" of Christian pilgrims, and felt the need to write in confirmation of God's unity while amongst this company, stating how "none but He should be worshipped."¹⁰² The monotheistic heart of the Qur'anic message on God's indivisibility, *tawhid*, appears to be directed at specific Christian doctrines: "Those who say, 'Allah is one in a Trinity,'

⁹⁶ David Cook, "Muhammad and Christianity," in *Routledge Handbook on Christian-Muslim Relations*, ed. David Thomas (Routledge, 2017), 63.

⁹⁷ Tolán, *Saracens*, 33.

⁹⁸ Bertaina, "Early Muslim Attitudes Towards the Bible", 102.

⁹⁹ Surah Ma'ida: 5:72.

¹⁰⁰ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 341.

¹⁰¹ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 324.

¹⁰² Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 325.

have certainly disbelieved. There is only One God.”¹⁰³ Elsewhere it encourages dissimilarity on this major point of Christian doctrine which sets Islam apart, “...do not say, ‘Trinity.’ Stop!—for your own good. Allah is only One God”.¹⁰⁴ The inscription on the Dome of the Rock, predating the Crusades, also appears as a statement against wayward Christian doctrine on the Trinity and Jesus: “He is God, the One. God, the Absolute. He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none comparable to Him”.¹⁰⁵ It was believed by some Muslims that the Trinity was comprised of God, Mary and Jesus, suggesting that Christians believed God had taken a wife in a human manner.¹⁰⁶ The inscription affirms God’s unity and additionally communicates the Muslim view that God was “far above having a son”.¹⁰⁷

Moral inferiority

Christians were reviled by Muslim writers for their immoral ways derived from false revelation proving their inferiority. The Crusader’s brutality and greed were frequently commented on. Their desire to conquer was explained by their characteristic covetousness. Al-Sulami claims that God used this innate greed of the Crusaders to punish the Muslims, having “tempted their enemies to snatch their country from their grasp” in order to cure Muslim “hearts of their faults.”¹⁰⁸ This apparent greed was noted also by Ibn al-Qalanisi who records an assassination that caused instability in a town, making its inhabitants beg for assistance from the outside in order to defend them “before the news reached the Franks and their covetous desires extended to it”.¹⁰⁹

Writing as a traveller from Al-Andalus, Ibn Jubayr noted stories concerning Christian behaviour he discovered during his time in the Levant.¹¹⁰ He describes Syrian Christians building boats and sailing to “harass” Muslim pilgrims where they committed “many infamous acts” which were

¹⁰³ Surah Al-Ma'idah verse 73.

¹⁰⁴ Sura 4:171.

¹⁰⁵ Quran, Sura 112; Beaumont, "Early Christian Attitudes towards Islam," 113.

¹⁰⁶ Jon Hoover, "Early and Medieval Muslim Attitudes Towards Christian Doctrines," in *Routledge Handbook on Christian-Muslim Relations*, ed. David Thomas (Routledge, 2017), 172-3.

¹⁰⁷ Hoover, "Early and Medieval Muslim Attitudes Towards Christian Doctrines," 168; Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 311; Sura 4:171.

¹⁰⁸ Al-Sulami, *The Book of the Jihad*, 206.

¹⁰⁹ Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, 57-8.

¹¹⁰ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 262.

“unheard of in Islam”. Such was their “impiousness” and “profanity” that they apparently aimed to enter the City of the Prophet and remove Muhammad from his tomb.¹¹¹

Elsewhere he praises select Christian behaviour, such as their justice: "The Muslim community bewails the injustice of a landlord of its own faith, and applauds the conduct of its opponent and enemy, the Frankish landlord, and is accustomed to justice from him".¹¹² This example does not denote Christian superiority, but rather serves the writers' cause by shaming his Muslim co-religionists into better behaviour. Ibn Jubayr observes how “it is strange” that the Christians around Mount Lebanon brought food to Muslim hermits and treated them “kindly”, as if such behaviour was not the standard he expected from Christians.¹¹³ Apparently, the Christians stated that these Muslims were “dedicated to Great and Glorious God” and therefore shared their resources. Ibn Jubayr uses this as an opportunity to admonish his co-religionists, for “if the Christians treat the opponents of their religion in this fashion, what think you of the treatment that the Muslims give each other?”¹¹⁴ Ibn Jubayr suggests that Muslims had sunk to a spiritual level below Christians; but ultimately this was a rhetorical strategy, using the inferiority of Christianity to chastise those who fell below the standards of a superior religion.

Association with filth: pigs and uncleanness

Christians could also be characterized as impure. Purity was an important concept for Islamic worship which permeated a Muslim's everyday life.¹¹⁵ Intrinsically impure things such as pigs were often associated with Christians.¹¹⁶ Muslim writers were aware (given that Christians lived in Islamic territories) that Christian customs did not adhere to their level of purity.¹¹⁷ Whether they lived nearby or far away, Christians could be regarded by Muslim writers as a contaminating presence. The Christian freedom to consume pork, which was strictly forbidden, *haram*, in Islam and Judaism, came to define Christianity as a major point of difference, so much

¹¹¹ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 52.

¹¹² Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 317.

¹¹³ McCabe, “The Anomaly of Ibn Jubayr,” 5, 12.

¹¹⁴ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 300.

¹¹⁵ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 284.

¹¹⁶ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 285.

¹¹⁷ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 296.

so that Muslim writers came to refer to Christians themselves as ‘pigs’.¹¹⁸ Ibn Jubayr remarks on the Crusader kingdom of Tibnīn in Lebanon as a place belonging to “the sow known as Queen who is the mother of the pig who is the Lord of Acre – may God destroy it.”¹¹⁹ In Sicily, he describes the city of Messina as “teeming with worshippers of the Cross” to the point that it “chokes its inhabitants, and constricts them almost to strangling”. These inhabitants are the source of the town’s uncleanness which he describes as “full of smells and filth” and its dense Christian population as “churlish” to strangers.¹²⁰ Ibn Jubayr attributes King Baldwin IV and his leprosy to divine punishment for his religious affiliation. “God was not slow to vengeance” having deprived him the joys of youth in this world, he was confident that “chastisement” also awaited the king in the hereafter.¹²¹ On his return voyage, Ibn Jubayr shared his journey with many Christian pilgrims, where Muslims segregated themselves as best they could and “secured places apart from the Franks”. The Christians were too numerous to count; Ibn Jubayr hoped that God would “soon relieve us of their company”.¹²² He implies that these overcrowded conditions would have been more bearable had space been shared with fellow Muslims whom he knew would have kept a standard of cleanliness. Similarly, he would not have invoked God to remove his co-religionists.

The Crusaders’ invasion was seen by Muslim writers to have polluted Islamic territory.¹²³ Ibn Jubayr’s observation on the city of Acre is negative and he hopes for God to “exterminate” the Christians and restore it to Muslim hands.¹²⁴ Acre is described as so crowded that he could hardly set foot on the roads. He perceived it burning fiercely with “unbelief and unpiousness” a place where “pigs (Christians) and crosses abound. It stinks and is filthy, being full of refuse and excrement.”¹²⁵ The Crusaders wrested the city violently from Muslim control, which caused the “eyes of Islam” to swell with tears because of it. Mosques had become churches yet “God kept undefiled one part of the principal mosque, which remained in the hands of the Muslims” and elsewhere God protected a prophet’s tomb “from desecration by the unbelievers for the benign

¹¹⁸ Pork prohibited in Suratul Baqara Verse 173; Suratul Al Maida Verse 3; Suratul Al Anman Verse 145, and Suratul An Nahl 16:115; David Abulafia, "Propelled by Faith," *History Today* 61, no. 8 (2011):13.

¹¹⁹ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 316

¹²⁰ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 338

¹²¹ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 324; Qu’ran XX, 127.

¹²² Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 325.

¹²³ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 293; Mallet, "The Crusades," 129.

¹²⁴ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 318.

¹²⁵ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 318.

influence of this holy tomb.”¹²⁶ Elsewhere Tyre is used to contrast with the city of Acre. Tyre’s streets as “cleaner than those of Acre” and the people who dwelt there possess a “kinder” nature towards “the Muslim stranger” and dwell in peace. Acre in comparison had a dense Crusader population and was seen as a particularly corrupt centre for Christianity, being “bigger, more impious, and more unbelieving”.¹²⁷ Ibn Jubayr warned fellow Muslims against entering the lands conquered by the Crusaders or remaining to live “amongst infidels”.¹²⁸ A Muslim made destitute by the conquest would have to endure “pains” to live with the infidel’s “base and lower orders”. A Muslim would be distressed to hear “the reviling” of Muhammad amongst Christians who denied his prophet-hood. Their “absence of cleanliness”, an innate habit derived from the climate of their Christian homeland, accompanied the Christians in the Crusader territory.¹²⁹ The “mixing with pigs” and other prohibited matter were “too numerous” to describe which equally would make the land inhospitable to a Muslim.¹³⁰ There could be “no excuse in the eyes of God for a Muslim to stay in any infidel country, save when passing through it”.¹³¹

The Christian threat to Islam: conversion

The contaminating presence of Christians was also thought to threaten pollution of the Muslim faith by its proximity.¹³² Under the Crusaders’ rule, Christianity was blatantly displayed. Ibn al-Qalanisi observed how Christians “erected crosses over the towns”.¹³³ This must have contrasted with the Muslim society Ibn Jubayr was used to in Al-Andalus where such displays were required to be limited. Under King William, many who served him are described as Muslims who concealed their faith, remaining “firm to the Muslim divine law”.¹³⁴ Ibn Jubayr concludes that this was forgivable, and quotes from the Qur’an, stating it was allowed for “he

¹²⁶ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 318.

¹²⁷ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 319.

¹²⁸ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 321.

¹²⁹ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 270, 274, 276, 282.

¹³⁰ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 321.

¹³¹ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 321.

¹³² Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 296.

¹³³ Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, 47.

¹³⁴ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 340.

who, being under compulsion, yet in his heart believes’.”¹³⁵ William’s kindness and attention could also cause a Muslim to “forget his native land”.¹³⁶ Ibn Jubayr beseeches God to protect Muslims from this deliberate “seduction” which may tempt them away from the true faith and to “protect the Muslims from his hostility.”¹³⁷ In Sicily, he observes how Christians and Muslims lived side-by-side owning property, where “the Christians treat these Muslims well and ‘have taken them to themselves as friends’”.¹³⁸ In Tyre, the state of Muslims, living in peaceful co-existence with Christians, was such an improvement on the state of those in Acre that Ibn Jubayr feared for their spirituality.¹³⁹ Mingling too closely with Christians tempted conversion, which was arguably a purpose of the segregation laws made under the Pact of Umar in territories under Muslim rule.

Paul Cobb notes that the Crusaders were perceived as a cultural threat to the local Muslims.¹⁴⁰ Ibn Jubayr writes of positive Christian attitudes “which would offer temptation to ignorant souls”, and asks God to keep Muslims “from seducement.”¹⁴¹ The concept of Christian seduction, *Fitna*, a “seduction,” or “magic spell” was a common observation. The praiseworthy qualities of Christians that Ibn Jubayr mentions may be placed in this context.¹⁴² He recounts the story of a young Muslim who had come to Acre, where he “mixed with the Christians, and taken on much of their character”. This contaminating presence “seduced” him into following “the devil” who made him renounce his faith and become a Christian. He became “unclean” and baptised, hastening his journey to “the flames of hell.” He then implores God for protection against deviating from “the pure faith” and enable him and his companions to “die as Muslims”.¹⁴³ He observed Christian women following the fashion of Muslim women, dressed veiled and wearing extravagant robes, “bearing all the adornments of Muslim women, including jewellery, henna on the fingers, and perfumes”, which must have been jarringly different with

¹³⁵ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 358; Quran XVI, 106.

¹³⁶ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 340.

¹³⁷ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 340.

¹³⁸ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 338-9; Ibn Jubayr quotes the Koran XX, 41.

¹³⁹ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 319.

¹⁴⁰ Paul M. Cobb, *The Race for Paradise: An Islamic History of the Crusades* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 177.

¹⁴¹ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 345.

¹⁴² McCabe, “The Anomaly of Ibn Jubayr”, 5, 12.

¹⁴³ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 324.

what he was accustomed to seeing of Christian women's garb within Muslim society. He invokes God's protection from the "bewitchment" it represented.¹⁴⁴

Elsewhere he describes a Christian wedding as "an alluring worldly spectacle" and again invokes God's protection "from the seduction of the sight".¹⁴⁵ Ibn Jubayr often sought to protect himself from the dangers of praising Christians by adding pleas to God to protect him from the "alluring sight" and from seducements.¹⁴⁶ Conversely, it grieved Ibn Jubayr to learn of local "Muslims and their relations with the worshippers of the Cross- may God destroy them" in which their "humiliation and abasement", their state of vassalage under the Christians, was out of place. This state brought with it calamities such as the "misfortunes of apostasy" and he pleads for God's protection from the "apostasy and false ways."¹⁴⁷

It was considered better therefore that Muslims be kept apart from Christians. Ibn Jubayr recounts a local story from the inhabitants concerning the capture of Acre by the Crusaders. The Muslims had been "determined to gather their wives and children into the Great Mosque and there put them to the sword, rather than that the Christians should possess them", yet were ultimately prevented from having to carry out this desperate act.¹⁴⁸ Elsewhere he tells of a praiseworthy Muslim woman who "desiring only to escape from the temptation (of apostasy), and to live in the lands of the Muslims" was prepared to leave her family and marry a stranger "for her love of Islam."¹⁴⁹ It also grieved Ibn Jubayr to hear a story from a local Muslim man who confided his desire for him and his family to be sold as slaves so as to find themselves "dwelling in Muslim lands", rather than remaining free in Christian lands.¹⁵⁰

Conclusion

Muslim writers were influenced by their Christian Other.¹⁵¹ The moral values of Muslim society were reinforced through the use of Christians, both near and far, as contrasting points of

¹⁴⁴ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 350.

¹⁴⁵ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 320.

¹⁴⁶ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 321.

¹⁴⁷ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 357.

¹⁴⁸ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 321.

¹⁴⁹ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 360.

¹⁵⁰ Ibn Jubayr, *Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, 358.

¹⁵¹ Said, *Orientalism*, 72.

difference. Religious difference was vital to ‘medieval Orientalism’. It provided the background for a medieval writer’s approach to differences in people and to what a modern analyst might call the Other.¹⁵² As previously indicated, modern historiography has come to see Islam as a dominant force by the eleventh century compared with Christendom, which somewhat challenges the assumption in Orientalist theory that the West was dominant. Some of Said’s statements concerning the post-colonial West can therefore be made in reverse when applied to the medieval period. Said writes that the “Orient and everything in it was, if not patently inferior to, then in need of corrective study by the West.”¹⁵³ The same might be said of a Muslim ‘Oriental’ perspective towards the Christian ‘Occident’. In regard to Scripture, Muslims can be seen as creating their own interpretation which served to denigrate its former Christian custodians as inferior. Muslim writers sought to establish their superior knowledge and set about to correct ‘misinterpretations’ of the Bible through an ‘Islamicizing’ approach, which progressively replaced the perceived inferior portions of the Bible with superior Islamic versions.¹⁵⁴

According to theorists such as Foucault, knowledge was used to justify power structures whereby the dominant group portrays its knowledge as superior, while the knowledge of marginalized groups is deemed inferior. Norman Daniel argues how ideas and beliefs of one group can become distorted and accepted as myths by another. The perpetuation of ‘the truth’ into something that contrasts with what another group actually believes keeps those who are othered from being allowed to speak for themselves.¹⁵⁵ The Christianity that Muslim writers understood was not the same Christianity that a Christian would recognise.¹⁵⁶ Said writes how each era produces its “own distorted knowledge of the other”.¹⁵⁷ Hence, Muslim writers’ understanding of Christian culture “was ignorant but complex.”¹⁵⁸ Christians were portrayed in Muslim texts as protected ‘People of the Book’, acknowledged for their monotheistic roots, but they were also enemies and infidel polytheists. According to Said, the perceived differences which helped to

¹⁵² Burge, “The Theological Dynamics of Medieval Christian –Relations,” 208; Schaller, “*Crusader Orientalism*,” 4.

¹⁵³ Said, *Orientalism*, 49.

¹⁵⁴ Bertaina, “Early Muslim Attitudes Towards the Bible,” 98-9, 103.

¹⁵⁵ Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West, the Making of an Image*, 12.

¹⁵⁶ Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West, the Making of an Image*, 301.

¹⁵⁷ Said, *Orientalism*, xvii.

¹⁵⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 55.

create the Other may be real or imagined.¹⁵⁹ These “fictions” created distinctions and boundaries which assisted Muslim writers to derive a greater sense of their own identity.¹⁶⁰

Islam’s view of itself was shaped by contact and conflict with a Christian Other. It is on the issue of monotheism that Muslims solidified their religious identity by contrasting their faith to Christianity. Christian doctrine proved to be an important element for Muslim writers to use in forging the monotheistic identity of Islam. Muslim writers may be seen as portraying Christianity as polytheistic, in order to strengthen their identity as the one and only true monotheistic religion. Hoover argues that Christianity needed to be ‘domesticated’ in order to make room for Islam.¹⁶¹ Muslim writers focused on the most apparent differences which enabled Christianity to be identified as an inferior Other. The Christian failure to practice pure monotheism granted Islam superiority and legitimacy. The more Muslim writers wrote on Christianity, stressing the differences between the two faiths, the more Islam shaped its own religious identity. The advent of the Crusades added further impetus to emphasise the Christian Other. Success in war became the basis on which to prove God’s favour and affirm a specific and superior identity in contrast to the Christian foe.

The West’s depiction of the imposter Muhammad, as Said argued, had an Islamic counterpart. Although Jesus was not viewed as the mirror image of the Prophet, an “imposter” to Islam, the Christian interpretation of Jesus certainly was a fraudulent doctrine for Muslims. The figure of Jesus was adopted by Islam rather than outright rejected, in a manner that can be described as a hybridization between cultures, as Bhabha described it: an altered version of Jesus assimilated into Islam, an example of ‘mimicry’, an “almost the same but not quite” version of the Christian rendition.¹⁶² The creation of a Christian Other reveals how Muslims had themselves shaped a distinct identity in response to the ongoing presence of this contrasting Other. The acknowledgment of the role played by the Christian Other in Muslim identity counters Said’s view of othering as a one-way process and helps to broaden an otherwise ‘Western’ dominated perspective in the scholarly field on medieval alterity.

¹⁵⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 54; Staszak, “Other/otherness”, 2.

¹⁶⁰ Said, *Orientalism*, 54.

¹⁶¹ Hoover, “Early and Medieval Muslim Attitudes Towards Christian Doctrines,” 174.

¹⁶² Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 89; Said, *Orientalism*, 55-6.

Chapter Four: Jewish Perspectives on Christians

Introduction

The resilience of Jewish identity throughout history has often been commented on. Mark Twain wrote, for example: “All things are mortal but the Jew.” A contributing factor in this resilience has been long-standing traditions of Jewish self-definition, and what might be called a Jewish sense of the Other. Jewish interactions with Christianity, particularly in the medieval period, contributed to the shaping and solidifying of a sense of identity regarding who a Jew was and what Judaism was, but also who a Jew was not. However, too often Jewish history is framed in a way that emphasizes the suffering and victimization of Jews as part of this sense of self-definition. There is a need to draw attention to aspects of Jewish history that were not about persecution, even though some Jewish sources, such as *The Mainz Anonymus*, were written to record it. Borýsek argues how this ‘lachrymose conception’ tends to focus on the marginalization of Jews in the past, making persecution the generalized summation of their collective past.¹ The Lachrymose model could be viewed as the Orientalist view of Jewish history, since it creates a simplified view of the Jews akin to the Western Orientalist view of the East, reducing Jewish identity to an essentialized and stereotypical product of suffering. The model negates the agency of Jews and reduces them to being viewed as passive victims of othering. To contribute towards countering such limited views of Jewish identity, this chapter will look instead at how Jews actively perceived those they considered to be their Others. Jews were not always the othered and were themselves capable of exercising the othering strategies which were often employed against them.

The addition of a Jewish perspective provides a more holistic understanding of Jewish-Christian demarcation and complements the Christian perspective on Jews. It served to deepen the examination of the Other throughout the medieval period. The sources used to examine this

¹ Martin Borýsek, “Strangers in the House of Israel,” 77; The ‘Lachrymose conception of Jewish history’ was coined by Salo Baron in 1928, *Social and Religious History of the Jews*. He advocated for the recognition of Jewish agency, resilience, and participation in history.

perspective were generally created in response to intense persecution or polemical situations. Included are Maimonides's extensive Letter to Yemen, written in the late twelfth century to educate and encourage the spiritual stability of Yemen's Jewish community so that it might persevere in its Jewish identity against Islamic forced conversions, apostasy and heresy. The Letter provides insights into the perceived flaws of rival faiths and insight into Judaism's theology from a medieval scholar. Judah Halevi's *Al-Kitab al-Khazari* was written around 1125 as a defence for 'the despised faith,' depicting an imagined dialogue between the pagan Khazar king and the different monotheistic faiths which Halevi uses to explore the nature of reason and religion and to argue for the superiority of Judaism. Rabbi Ephraim's *Sefer Zekhirah* and Solomon bar Simson's *Chronicle* were written in response to violence against Jews around the First (1096) and Second (1147) crusades to record and explain Jewish suffering, which to an extent limits their scope but also provides valuable insight into Jewish experience of these events.

This chapter will firstly explore the significance of a Jewish distinction between Jews and Gentiles and its influence on characterizations of Christians. Secondly, it will examine briefly Judaism's historical relationship with Christianity and its key figure, Jesus. Thirdly, the various depictions of Christianity in selected medieval texts will be analysed. It will then finally turn to the influence that Jewish depictions and interactions with Christianity had on Jewish identity.

Jewish distinctiveness from Gentiles

Jewish culture in the medieval period had an ingrained binary distinction between Jews and Gentiles which sharpened Jewish identity.² Considered through the modern concept of othering, this distinction served a mirroring function, in which the Self is defined by what divides it from Others, making the opposing entity essential to self-identity.³ Predating the medieval period, Jews had a long-standing distinction between themselves and other nations, including Christians.

² Gentiles = *goim* = peoples/ nations; Leo Spitzer, *The Gentiles. The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* (1946): 445.

³ Said, *Orientalism*, 2, 11; Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 5; Yıldız, "The Other, Otherness and Othering in the Middle Ages", 2, 3, 11.

Katz notes that Judaism's inherent positioning of the Jewish people as the true servants of God resulted in a dichotomy that placed Jewry on one side and all the other nations of the world on the other.⁴

In traditional Judaism, Gentiles are considered by Jews to be under the Covenant of Noah, which is applicable to all humanity.⁵ Jews, however, have distinct covenants with God, such as the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants, which defined them as a particular people chosen by God. Maimonides⁶ reflects this divinely appointed status in his Letter to Yemen: "God has distinguished us from the rest of mankind" and has made Jews "unique by His laws and precepts."⁷ Jews were in possession of the "true faith" as exemplified by the "Holy Torah", which God specifically gave to the Jews, a people whom God chose "above all peoples" to possess divine truth.⁸ In his *Kuzari*, Judah Halevi distinguished Jews as an "angelic caste" which had been "permeated by the divine essence".⁹ Jewish awareness of this distinction influenced how they perceived those who were not chosen by God. The Gentile world was seen as prosperous in comparison to the scattered and exiled Jewish population. Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn recounts a poem describing how, though undeserving, all Gentile peoples were yet "secure and living in expansive circumstances."¹⁰ In Halevi's *Kuzari*, the king of the Khazars had no intention of asking a Jew his questions due to their "reduced condition and narrow-minded views, as their misery left them nothing commendable."¹¹ He considered the Jewish people to be "despised" and "humbled" in their existence within the Gentile world.¹² However, Halevi saw hope and writes that if Jews endure for God's sake they will become "the pride of the generation which will come with the Messiah" and be granted "the deliverance that we hope for."¹³ For Halevi, the Gentiles have a prescribed role in that they merely serve to "pave the way for the

⁴ Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Studies in Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times*. Vol. 3 (Behrman House, Inc, 1961), 24.

⁵ Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 3.

⁶ Known by the acronym "Rambam": Rabbi Moses ben Maimon.

⁷ Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, ii.

⁸ Ephraim of Bonn, "Sefer Zekhirah," in *The Jews and the Crusaders: The Hebrew Chronicles of the First and Second Crusades*, (University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 131; Deuteronomy 10:15.

⁹ Judah Halevi, "The Kuzari (Kitab al Khazari): An Argument for the Faith of Israel." (Schocken Books, 1964), 73.

¹⁰ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 125.

¹¹ Halevi, "Kuzari", 44.

¹² Halevi, "Kuzari", 40.

¹³ Halevi, "Kuzari", 79.

expected Messiah”.¹⁴ Yuval argues that God’s vengeance upon the Gentile world would usher in the awaited messianic period.¹⁵ It was believed by Jewish writers that “the Expected One” would be sent by God at “a time of great catastrophe and dire misfortune for Israel as was predicted.”¹⁶ In the midst of Crusader violence, Ephraim observes that “Judah and Israel declined to the lowest level, and the day of retribution drew near.”¹⁷ Oppression of the Jews by Gentiles was to facilitate the upheaval leading to the messianic period, a time in which it was believed that the “kingdom Edom” would be destroyed.¹⁸ Yuval argues that Jews saw the existence of the Gentiles as proof of the truth of Judaism.¹⁹ For Halevi, the existence of Christianity was part of God’s plan, in which the Gentiles would be used, as Lasker writes, against their will, to bring about the messianic age and mark a return to Judaism, the “true religion.”²⁰ Jewish writers express a yearning for this time when God would restore them from exile back to their land.²¹

Separation from the Gentile world

Jewish distinction was further exemplified by their mode of living. In medieval society, Jews have often been perceived as separated from the Gentile world, and living outside the communities within which they found themselves.²² The Torah admonished the biblical Israelites from adopting the practices of other nations. Post-biblical Jewish leaders carried on this principle to resist total integration and to maintain a distinct Jewish way of life.²³ Chazan writes how, over the ages, the Jewish people regarded this separation positively.²⁴ Indeed, the Mosaic Law establishes a structure for the separation of the Jewish people from other nations so as to make them a distinct people. This goes hand-in-hand with the concept that they had been chosen by

¹⁴ Halevi, “Kuzari”, 227.

¹⁵ Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 99.

¹⁶ Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, xvi ;Deuteronomy 32:36.

¹⁷ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah* ,123.

¹⁸ Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 99.

¹⁹ Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 113. There are parallels with Augustine’s doctrine concerning the Jews’ serving as a witness to the true faith, in this context, Christianity.

²⁰ Daniel J. Lasker, “Rashi and Maimonides on Christianity,” in *Between Rashi and Maimonides: Themes in Medieval Jewish Thought, Literature and Exegesis*, ed. Ephraim Kanarfogel (Yeshiva University Press, 2010), 87.

²¹ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 121,133.

²² Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 195.

²³ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 196.

²⁴ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 196.

God as “a people for His own possession”.²⁵ This was an innate ethnic-religious distinction that went beyond simply living separately.²⁶ For example, Halevi considered Gentile converts to Judaism as unable to attain the full benefits possessed by “born Israelites”, and did not view those who became Jews as completely “equal”. In particular “the gift of prophecy was retained among Abraham’s descendants”.²⁷ In his Letter to Yemen, Maimonides points out how Israel as a whole is a special, separate entity: “We are in possession of the divine assurance that Israel is indestructible and imperishable, and will always continue to be a pre-eminent community.”²⁸ Though scattered amongst “alien nations”, Bar Simson regards the Jewish communities as a nation, one that God had chosen to be “elect of all the nations” referring to its people as a “Holy nation”.²⁹ On a cultural and intellectual level, Jews lived to a degree apart from their Gentile neighbours and embraced the projection of themselves as the “people that dwells apart”.³⁰

This does not mean that Jews lived in isolation from Gentiles; on the contrary, Jews had Christian neighbours and traded with them. According to Chazan, Jewish communities in the tenth and eleventh centuries were small, and as a result, interaction between Jews and non-Jews was inevitable.³¹ Jews were exposed to Christian art, society and their polemics which encouraged Jewish counter-polemics to bolster their identity against Christian claims of possessing exclusive religious truth, including the Church’s usurpation of Jewish concepts such as the ‘True Israel’.³² Yuval argues that in order for Jews to keep their religious identity fertile amidst Christian influences, the Jews’ status as a minority necessitated the creation of barriers and estrangement from their Christian neighbours.³³ Because of their smaller population, Jews were open to using othering strategies as a means of strengthening the sense of their communal identity against the majority living outside.³⁴

²⁵ Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2, 26:18.

²⁶ Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 206.

²⁷ Lippman Bodoff, “Was Yehudah Halevi Racist?” *Judaism* 38, no. 2 (1989): 174; Halevi, “Kuzari”, 79, 91.

²⁸ Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, v.

²⁹ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 22, 26, 65.

³⁰ Numbers 23:9

³¹ Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 28.

³² Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 141-2, 218.

³³ Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 22.

³⁴ Borýsek, *Strangers in the House of Israel*, 77.

Moral inferiority

The achievement of this separation was assisted by the Jewish writers' portrayal of the Gentile Christians as morally inferior. Contact between Jews and Gentiles was regulated by Jewish law with the intention of keeping Jews away from idolatrous practices.³⁵ This was considered largely a moral distinction since other nations, including Christianity, were generally regarded as polytheistic.³⁶ Chazan notes that Christianity was regarded as a lower level of spiritual and moral achievement.³⁷ Halevi viewed non-Jews as those in need of education in the true monotheistic faith, and needed to "become pious and learned", suggesting they were impious and ignorant due to their Gentile status. However, this view did not advocate for the subjugation of those who were not Jewish.³⁸ Maimonides remarks how Gentiles interacted with immoral practices such as the occult in order to determine the future, practices which were prohibited for Jews.³⁹ Elsewhere he quotes from Deuteronomy to say that "these nations, that thou art to dispossess" engage in practices which for the Jews "the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do."⁴⁰

Christians were also considered to be morally weaker than Jews because of their apparent openness to bribery. In Jewish law the taking of bribes was strictly forbidden, but Christians were considered receptive to bribes.⁴¹ Chazan notes how pervasive it was among medieval Jews to offer their Christian attackers bribes in order to safeguard their lives and that of their communities.⁴² One reason for the pervasiveness of this practice was its effectiveness, which led to the view that Christians were morally weak in comparison to Jews. In a case recorded by Ephraim of Bonn, writing in the late twelfth century, which involved the murder of two young Jewish boys by a "wicked" and "brazen Gentile", the local Jewish community "paid the bishop a

³⁵ Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 24.

³⁶ Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 24. In his review of Katz's work, Berger notes that Jews could consider Islam to be polytheistic also since they were considered part of "the nations". However, Jewish writers would have refrained from writing such a statement within Islamic territories: David Berger, "Jacob Katz on Jews and Christians in the Middle Ages," in *The Pride of Jacob: Essays on Jacob Katz and His Work*, ed. Jay M. Harris (Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies, 2002), 56. However, Lasker observes Maimonides specifically considered Christianity and not Islam to be idolatry: Lasker, "Rashi and Maimonides on Christianity", 4.

³⁷ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 218.

³⁸ Bodoff, "Was Yehudah Halevi Racist?", 179; Halevi, "Kuzari", 79.

³⁹ Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, x.

⁴⁰ Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, x; Deuteronomy 18:14.

⁴¹ Exodus 23:8; Deuteronomy 16:19.

⁴² Chazan, *Medieval Jewry in Northern France*, 40.

bribe” whereupon he “ordered that the culprit be seized.”⁴³ The bribe suggests that the Jews believed that the bishop would not have assisted in bringing about justice without monetary inducement. The expectation that Christians were generally motivated by greed made the intervention of Bernard of Clairvaux against anti-Jewish preaching during the Second Crusade difficult for some Jews to believe. Ephraim recounts with perplexity the effective manner in which the priest spoke to disperse their enemies, stating: “we have not inquired whether he was receiving payment for speaking on behalf of Israel.”⁴⁴

Solomon bar Simson also notes how the bishops had a tendency towards greed. He tells how the Jewish elders decided to ransom the community by bribing the various princes, bishops and governors, whereupon they gave “everything they possessed to the bishop, so that he would save them from the evil doers”.⁴⁵ In the end, however, he was unable to save them for “God had given them over to their enemies”.⁴⁶ In another example, Bar Simson reports how the Jewish leaders of a community implored a local bishop for help, who advised them to bring all their money, wives, children, and belongings into the courtyard of the bishop until the hordes had passed. The bishop then revealed his corrupt nature: “[He] gave this advice so as to herd us together and hold us like fish that are caught in an evil net, and then to turn us over to the enemy, while taking our money”.⁴⁷

Children of adultery: Yeshua, the Christ

Jews living in Christendom were often under pressure to convert. The Christian majority posed an ongoing intellectual and spiritual challenge to the Jewish claim to divine election.⁴⁸ Jews were therefore acutely aware of Christian polemicizing and theology. In particular, the Christian claim of Jesus’s divinity fostered further Jewish denial of Jesus’s messianic claims.⁴⁹ Marcus argues that Jews developed an “inward acculturation”, a process according to which those who did not

⁴³ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 124.

⁴⁴ See above Chapter 1 for Bernard’s preaching; Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 122.

⁴⁵ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 24.

⁴⁶ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 24, 63.

⁴⁷ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 24.

⁴⁸ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 202, 211.

⁴⁹ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 141; Maimonides, *Letter to Yemen*, xvii.

convert retained a strong collective Jewish identity, which was expressed through the transformation of Christian cultural characteristics into parodic or neutralized forms.⁵⁰ Jewish resistance to Christian doctrine is seen in works such *Toledot Yeshu*⁵¹ which originated during the early centuries of the Church as an alternative to the Gospels' portrayal of the life of Christ.⁵² Many different manuscripts retell the story which depicts Jesus as an illegitimate child, who used magic to lead people astray and died ingloriously.⁵³ These stories of Jesus's background helped to propagate a derogatory perception of Christianity in Jewish populations, amongst whom Jesus's name *Yeshua* had come to be changed to *Yeshu*, an acronym for the curse 'Yimach SHmo V'zichrono' (may his name and memory be blotted out).⁵⁴ Jewish writers often reinforced these altered representations of Christian beliefs in order to insulate their own sense of identity and also to validate their own beliefs in comparison.⁵⁵ Jews therefore had access to superior knowledge which put them above Christians, the errant followers of a false Messiah.⁵⁶ Maimonides records a series of false messiahs in Jewish history and includes Jesus among them, reducing his significance while simultaneously ridiculing Christian doctrines.

One notable example of the Jewish refutation of Christian claims of Jesus's messiahship was the rabbinic shift in the interpretation of the 'Suffering Servant' referred to in Isaiah 53. Long before the medieval period, rabbis agreed that this verse spoke of the Messiah, of which interpretation some Christians were also aware.⁵⁷ In the late eleventh century, Rashi's⁵⁸ writings reflect a shift in collective opinion. Instead of following the earlier Jewish view that it refers to the Messiah, he interprets the verse as referring to Israel as a whole. This interpretation would come to replace

⁵⁰ Ivan G. Marcus, "A Jewish-Christian Symbiosis: The Culture of Early Ashkenaz," in *Jewish Culture and Society in Medieval France and Germany*, ed. Ivan G. Marcus (Routledge, 2023), 22.

⁵¹ Also known as *Ma'aseh Yeshu* (The Story of Jesus).

⁵² Eidelberg, *The Jews and the Crusaders*, 16; (Under Islamic rule, texts such as the *toledot yeshu* were used to maintain a Jewish identity separate from their fellow Christian dhimmis); Philip Alexander, "The Toledot Yeshu in the Context of Jewish-Muslim Debate," in *Toledot Yeshu (The Life Story of Jesus) Revisited: A Princeton Conference*, ed. Schäfer, Deutsch, and Meerson. Mohr Siebeck (2011), 144.

⁵³ Michael Meerson, "Illegitimate Jesus: Family Matters with 'Toledot Yeshu'." (2011), 92; Described by Jewish writers as a 'mamzer', illegitimate child of Miriam; Jewish writers gave Jesus the title "seducer of Israel".

⁵⁴ Meerson, "Illegitimate Jesus, 94.

⁵⁵ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 220.

⁵⁶ Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 28.

⁵⁷ See thirteenth-century Jewish convert Friar Paul and his arguments with rabbis: Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 205.

⁵⁸ "Rashi" is a Hebrew acronym: Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki or Solomon ben Isaac.

the older one and become the dominant view in rabbinic literature during the medieval period.⁵⁹ This may be seen as an example of collective Jewish resistance to Christianity.⁶⁰ Gager writes that Jews viewed Christians as having misunderstood and distorted the Scriptures in general.⁶¹ Berger also notes that the collective reinterpretation of the servant in Isaiah 53 reflected a need for Jewish writers to counter the Christian interpretation of Jewish scripture by avoiding its messianic connotation completely.⁶² Jewish writers, like Maimonides, disagreed strongly with Rashi's interpretation of the Isaiah verse, but nevertheless refuted the Christian claim of Jesus being the Messiah.⁶³

Within Judaism, Jesus was primarily seen as a heretic.⁶⁴ Maimonides describes Jesus as “the Nazarene” and curses him, regarding him as “a heretic among the Jews who would endeavour to destroy the Law, claim prophecy for himself, make pretences to miracles, and allege that he is the Messiah”.⁶⁵ At its founding, Jews had generally viewed Christianity as a Jewish sect. Regarded as *minim* (heretics) that deviated from mainstream Judaism, early Christians became alienated from the new form of Judaism which arose after the destruction of the Second Temple in A.D. 70.⁶⁶ Over time Christianity became predominately comprised of Gentiles rather than Jews, which naturally led to cultural deviation from those aspects that had made Christianity Jewish.⁶⁷ By the medieval period, Christianity had become linked with the derogatory perspective that Jews had of Jesus. Bar Simson's text contains numerous examples of how Jews perceived Christian doctrine. During persecution by Christians, Jews refused to exchange their

⁵⁹ David Berger, "Rashi on Isaiah 53: Exegetical Judgment or Response to the Crusade?" *Polemical and Exegetical Polarities in Medieval Jewish Cultures: Studies in Honour of Daniel J. Lasker*, eds. Ehud Krinis, Nabih Bashir, Sara Offenberger, and Shalom Sadik (De Gruyter, 2021), 205.

⁶⁰ Lasker, "Rashi and Maimonides on Christianity", 14.

⁶¹ John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (Oxford University Press, 1983), 135.

⁶² Berger, "Rashi on Isaiah 53," 304.

⁶³ Lasker, "Rashi and Maimonides on Christianity", 3.

⁶⁴ Talmud, Sanhedrin, 107b.

⁶⁵ Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, iv; The common curse: "may his bones be ground to dust". A 'Nazarene' was a title that could be used in a derogatory way in the first century due to its associations with low status. E.g. John 1:46.

⁶⁶ Lynch, *Early Christianity*, 42; Alon Goshen-Gottstein, *Same God, Other God: Judaism, Hinduism, and the Problem of Idolatry* (Springer, 2017), 224; The 'Oral Law', (represented primarily by the Talmud) in contrast to the Written Law (i.e., the Pentateuch) of the Bible, was different from the Judaism of the biblical past. It was this Talmudic Judaism which was set at odds with the Christianity in its Catholicized form during the Middle Ages. See: Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 24-5.

⁶⁷ Lynch, *Early Christianity*, 43.

faith for one who was “held in contempt in his own generation, a bastard son conceived by a menstruating and wanton mother.”⁶⁸ The Christians are believers in the “abominable son of harlotry” and are people who “acknowledge the offspring of promiscuity” and “that stock of adultery” as they are “children of whoredom” for believing “in a god who was a bastard”.⁶⁹ These labels are reflected in Maimonides’ reminder to his Jewish readers “that ours is the true and authentic divine religion”.⁷⁰ It may be observed that, to an extent, the Jewish reactions to Christianity moulded rabbinic Judaism. Yuval writes that confrontation with Christianity lay at the very heart of Talmudic Judaism whose formation had been shaped by the negation of the other alternative represented by Christianity.⁷¹

Christians as idolaters

Jewish writers commonly regarded Christianity as idolatrous. Outwardly, Christianity resembled forms of polytheism, because of their Trinitarian understanding of God and their use of images in worship.⁷² On the basis of their special relationship with God who entrusted them with His Torah, Jews had to keep to a higher standard compared with other nations and worship God alone.⁷³ Thus Maimonides writes in his Letter to Yemen that Moses had “prohibited image worship”.⁷⁴ Christianity was no better than ancient idolatry.⁷⁵ This view was likely due to Christianity’s association with the Gentile world and aspects of Roman paganism, corrupting what the Jewish people perceived to be an already errant Jewish heresy. Yet many Jews did recognize that Christianity differed in a critical sense from the paganism of antiquity.⁷⁶ Christianity was idolatrous in a more technical sense.⁷⁷ However, Christianity was not officially

⁶⁸ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 32.

⁶⁹ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 22, 26, 35.

⁷⁰ Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, ii.

⁷¹ Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 23, 25; Goetz and Wood, ‘Otherness’ in the Middle Ages, 1; David Berger, “Mutual Perceptions and Attitudes,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 6: *The Middle Ages: The Christian World*, ed. Robert Chazan (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 72.

⁷² Goshen-Gottstein, *Same God, Other God*, 54, 81.

⁷³ Goshen-Gottstein, *Same God, Other God*, 83.

⁷⁴ Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, xi.

⁷⁵ Marcus, *A Jewish-Christian Symbiosis*, 23.

⁷⁶ Berger, “Mutual Perceptions and Attitudes,” 68.

⁷⁷ Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 34. This is the basis for Jewish abstention from wine touched by Christians.

branded as idolatrous by Jewish religious authorities. In Talmudic law it was forbidden for Jews to conduct certain business dealings with idolaters.⁷⁸ Jewish communities could not avoid some contact and trade with the Christian societies amongst whom they lived.⁷⁹ Thus the stigma of *avodah zarah* (foreign worship) was not implemented towards Christianity in order to allow for these everyday interactions with Christians.⁸⁰ Eventually the term *shittuf*, the non-Jewish worship of another being alongside God, could be used to classify Christianity since they were not Jewish.⁸¹ Goshen-Gottstein argues how this semantic solution reflects Jewish adaptation to and tolerance of religious differences, while simultaneously maintaining Jewish identity and those practices which reinforced their unique relationship with God.⁸² Despite this advancement, the laws implying that medieval Christians were not idolaters did not go beyond the narrow context that produced it.⁸³ According to Jacob Katz, Jews in the Middle Ages continued to consider Christianity to be *avodah zarah*, or at least theologically idolatrous since it was at the same time not strictly excluded from the term either.⁸⁴ The lack of prohibitions allowed Jews the freedom to hold various opinions about Christianity, as reflected by the rabbinic authorities, such as Maimonides who held that Christianity was *avodah zarah*.⁸⁵ Jewish writers often described Christianity in idolatrous terms and Christian churches were places of “idolatry”.⁸⁶ Similarly, Ephraim identified the wayward priest Radulf as “the priest of idolatry”.⁸⁷ Bar Simson describes the Crusaders’ intentions to journey to “their house of idolatry” in Jerusalem to seek “their Messiah”.⁸⁸ Ephraim describes an assault on a rabbi by Christians who sought to avenge “our god”, which implies that Christians worshiped a different god or a god alongside the Jewish God.⁸⁹ In whichever way that Christianity was categorized, the superiority of Judaism in comparison was continually stressed by Jewish writers.

⁷⁸ Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 162.

⁷⁹ Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 162.

⁸⁰ Marcus, *A Jewish-Christian Symbiosis*, 122; Goshen-Gottstein, *Same God, Other God*, 42.

⁸¹ Goshen-Gottstein, *Same God, Other God*, 35.

⁸² Goshen-Gottstein, *Same God, Other God*, 44.

⁸³ Berger, “Jacob Katz on Jews and Christians,” 60; Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 36.

⁸⁴ Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, 174.

⁸⁵ Goshen-Gottstein, *Same God, Other God*, 82, 224.

⁸⁶ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 127.

⁸⁷ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn. *Sefer Zekhirah*, 121, 127.

⁸⁸ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 21, 26, 68.

⁸⁹ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 131.

Closely connected with the perspective of Christians as idolatrous was the view that they were spiritually unclean and a potential source of ritual contamination to Jews. Throughout Jewish literature contrasts are made between the pure and the impure. For example, the corpses of those Jews willing to die rather than become defiled by a false religion are called “pure”, and the corpses of Gentiles who sought the Jews’ harm are “putrid”.⁹⁰ The church was a profane home for idolatry and a “disgusting house”.⁹¹ During violent persecution, Jewish writers called for God’s intervention against Christians “who have shed and profaned our blood.”⁹² Their crimes are two-fold: not only do they spill “pious” blood, but they also defile it as if by their presence.⁹³ Ephraim describes certain “worthless persons” who “had been defiled by the abominable profanation” and entreated a Jew “to profane himself” with baptism and in doing so “deny the Living God”.⁹⁴ Jews were often described as being seized by Christians and forcibly baptized. This “defiled” those subjected to the “disgusting water” made “bitter and accursed” by its Christian associations.⁹⁵ In another instance, a Jew in prayer laments how God had handed the people of Israel over to be consumed “by nations impure as swine”.⁹⁶ Similarly, Christians who followed Radulf’s cause are equated with impure animals like “the snake and the dogs”, and those who joined the attack are “impure uncircumcised ones”.⁹⁷ The defilement caused by insincere Jewish conversion to Christianity could be cleansed over time until “their defilement had worn off and been forgotten”.⁹⁸ Those who had been forced to renounce Judaism could return to “the true path” and be reconciled to their Jewish communities.⁹⁹

The victory of martyrdom

The threat of pollution from idolatrous Christians through forced conversion drove some Jews to choose martyrdom in order to protect their ‘Jewishness’. Martyrdom was viewed as the most

⁹⁰ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah* ,123-4.

⁹¹ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah* , 127. Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson* , 21, 26, 68.

⁹² Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah* ,121.

⁹³ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah* ,127.

⁹⁴ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah* ,123.

⁹⁵ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn. *Sefer Zekhirah* , 127.

⁹⁶ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson* , 65.

⁹⁷ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah* ,122; Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson* , 51.

⁹⁸ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah* ,131.

⁹⁹ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah* ,131.

outward and venerated act for the faithful to demonstrate their devotion to God. According to Mishnaic ruling, a Jew must die rather than succumb to idolatry.¹⁰⁰ Jewish writers record the ideal that Jews would rather die to avoid Christian contamination. Bar Simson details many instances of how faithful “holy souls” chose to die rather than convert and “defile” themselves.¹⁰¹ Chazan notes how the Jewish martyrs’ rejection of Christianity proved their devotion to God and would certainly earn them their eternal reward.¹⁰² Jewish writers depict Jews as having the assurance of an afterlife where their souls would “abide in the Garden of Eden- in the light of life” and would “behold the countenance of the Lord in its actual Glory and Greatness.”¹⁰³ There were also incidents in which Jews preferred to take their own lives rather than deny God.¹⁰⁴ When faced with violence and the choice between forced conversion or death, mothers and fathers are described as killing their own children rather than have them raised in the Christian “ways of error.”¹⁰⁵ Chazan argues how Jews responded to the radical Christian commitment to Christianity with a radical commitment to Judaism.¹⁰⁶ The choice to reject conversion by martyrdom was seen as ultimate proof for the truth of Judaism to all humankind.¹⁰⁷

The impact of martyrdom on the consciousness of following generations may be seen as having a solidifying effect on Jewish identity, in opposition to the perceived threat that conversion to Christianity posed to Jewish communities. Many Jews were “inspired by the valor of their brethren” and so “similarly chose to be slain in order to sanctify the Name before the eyes of all.”¹⁰⁸ The memory of Jewish commitment to the “Oneness of the Name” contributed to communal pride in their monotheistic identity, and their perceived righteousness stood as testament before Jews and Gentiles alike. Their sacrifice for the faith brought “the entire congregation of Israel in good stead forever and ever.”¹⁰⁹ Jewish writers placed great emphasis on the defence of monotheism, against the threat that Christianity intended to convert Jews away

¹⁰⁰ Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, 174.

¹⁰¹ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 22. See also reference to pure souls, 32.

¹⁰² Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 130.

¹⁰³ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 38-9, 56.

¹⁰⁴ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 23, 58.

¹⁰⁵ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 35, see also 67.

¹⁰⁶ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 199.

¹⁰⁷ Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 106, 131.

¹⁰⁸ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 23.

¹⁰⁹ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 132.

from the faith. In one example, a Jew would “not deny a living God for one that is dead, a rotting corpse”.¹¹⁰ Faithful Jews preferred to receive martyrdom and die “attesting to the Oneness of His Name” rather than becoming Christian.¹¹¹ Conversion presented a loss of Jewish identity because Jews viewed Jesus as a specifically anti-Jewish figure. Far from being the Jewish Messiah, he was a heretical figure worshipped by Christians as a god. Conversion meant joining the Christian community and abandoning their Jewish identity. Martyrdom therefore strongly contributed to the Jews’ self-image, as a powerful sign of their identity as unique custodians of divine truth.

In response to the violence inflicted upon Jewish communities, Jewish writers were motivated to explain Jewish suffering and the apparent successes of Christianity. According to Chazan, Jews were aware of Christian claims that Jewish suffering proved Christian religious truth above that of Judaism.¹¹² For Jews, Christian ascendancy did not mean an affirmation of Christian truth.¹¹³ Halevi viewed Jews as possessing a special relationship with God, one that was closer than that claimed by Islam or Christianity, and that was not reliant on the physical evidence of obtaining greatness on earth.¹¹⁴ Suffering was an acknowledged part of Jewish history and hence identity.¹¹⁵ However, it was important that the reason behind Jewish suffering was explained from a Jewish viewpoint and not by Christians who used it as evidence for their own claims of religious superiority.¹¹⁶ Chazan argues that Jews agreed with their Christian neighbours concerning their sinful status, but attributed this to their own failings in their unique relationship with God, which had brought the divine punishment of their exilic status upon them, just as Moses had warned: “the Lord shall scatter you among all the peoples from one end of the earth to the other”.¹¹⁷ Halevi determined that it was God who “keeps us in this our present condition in dispersion and exile”.¹¹⁸

Maimonides noted that since the divine law was given to the Jews, there had always been those in power who “by means of the sword, by violence, or by brute force” have made it their “first

¹¹⁰ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 60.

¹¹¹ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 31.

¹¹² Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 140.

¹¹³ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 141.

¹¹⁴ Halevi, “Kuzari,” 79.

¹¹⁵ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 139.

¹¹⁶ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 139-42.

¹¹⁷ Deuteronomy 28. Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 19, 140.

¹¹⁸ Berger, “Rashi on Isaiah 53,” 304.

aim” and “final purpose to destroy our law”.¹¹⁹ He perceived persecution as provoked by Gentile jealousy of the Jews’ special relationship with God, where “all the nations instigated by envy and impiety rose up against us” being motivated by their “enmity” to “persecute us.”¹²⁰ Bar Simson claimed that it was God who consigned His people to the sword, and it was His wrath that caused their enemies to “succeed in their purpose”.¹²¹ It was not the strength of their enemies that enabled them to wreak such destruction, but rather it was God “in Whose hand are the watercourses and the hearts of kings and princes”, who allowed it to be so.¹²² In this light, the enemy is simply the designated tool wielded by the God of the Jews to carry out the prescribed chastisement. According to Ephraim, the “transgression of my people” was deemed so great that it caused “the destruction of so many lives in the various Jewish communities”, and it was only by the mercy of God that the Jews survived.¹²³ The intervention of Bernard of Clairvaux was seen as God’s response to the Jews’ outcry at Radulf’s persecution. When “our enemies” heard Bernard’s address to them many Christians “ceased plotting to kill us”. At this outcome, credit is given not to the Christian priest, but to the “mercy of our Creator” who sent this “decent priest” to deal with their evil persecutor, without whom “no remnant or vestige would have remained of Israel.”¹²⁴ Elsewhere, God “provided a priest” to guide Jews who had been forcibly converted back to safety so that they might return to their Torah.¹²⁵ During the Second Crusade, and the reign of King Stephen of England (1135-1154), “God rescued Jews through the instrument of the king of England”, whose heart was moved by God to protect the Jews and save their lives.¹²⁶ Good deeds done by the king are downplayed and the significance of his actions is ascribed to God’s assistance on behalf of His chosen people, the Gentile king being but an instrument. This also implies that the king would not have extended help to the Jews but for God’s influence.

Halevi intended his work to encourage Jews who had become despondent at their lowly and “despised” position under rival religions by reminding them of their special identity as the

¹¹⁹ Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, iii; Maimonides then lists famous examples such as Amalek, Sisera, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Titus, Hadrian.

¹²⁰ Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, iii.

¹²¹ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 25, 29.

¹²² Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 45.

¹²³ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 122-3; Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 25.

¹²⁴ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 122.

¹²⁵ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 131.

¹²⁶ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 131.

original, true monotheistic faith, and in doing so he affirms their covenantal relationship with God to deal with the problem of exile.¹²⁷ Similarly, Bar Simson deals extensively with explanations for the persecution suffered by the Jews in order to provide some comfort to survivors. He writes that Jewish afflictions were a trial “divinely imposed upon an elect generation” to “sanctify His Great Name in His world” which was comparable to how God had tested patriarchs of the Scriptures such as Abraham.¹²⁸ He also asserts that there would also come a time when God would “avenge the blood of His servants” whereupon the “precious children of Zion” would “not be ashamed nor confounded forever.”¹²⁹ In light of outside religious threats to their faith, Maimonides also considered the persecutions to have purpose in order to “test and purify us” so that the pious ones of the “undefiled lineage of Jacob will adhere to our religion and remain within the fold”.¹³⁰ Thus, Jewish writers created their own explanation of their sufferings, omitting any implication that might give Christians an advantage, and thereby strengthened their identity as God’s chosen people.¹³¹

Christians as evil and satanic

God’s chosen people were also persecuted by satanic forces. Jewish writers perceived Christians as vessels for evil, moved easily to violence. Chazan notes how Jewish writers assumed an underlying Christian hatred of Jews.¹³² Christians are described as the “hand of evil Edom”,¹³³ a label used to denote persecution.¹³⁴ Jewish writers appealed to God to deliver His people from persecution in Christian lands, and to be rescued “from the exile of wicked Edom”, and to “overturn Edom as He did Sodom.”¹³⁵ Through the Church, Satan was at work to destroy the

¹²⁷ Bodoff, “Was Yehudah Halevi Racist?,” 177; Halevi, “Kuzari”, 107.

¹²⁸ Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 127; Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 22, 32.

¹²⁹ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 32, 53, 71; Isaiah 45:17.

¹³⁰ Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, vi.

¹³¹ Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 142.

¹³² Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 35.

¹³³ Edom is used to describe general persecution in biblical narratives, and is used also to denote Esau, the rejected son, who became identified with Christians in Jewish narratives; Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life*, 137; Berger, “Mutual Perceptions and Attitudes,” 72.

¹³⁴ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 30, see also 24.

¹³⁵ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 49; Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 132.

Jewish people.¹³⁶ The Church had called for the Crusades so it had to assume the burden of guilt for the numerous evils that it had inspired.¹³⁷ The initiator of the First Crusade, Pope Urban II, was under the influence of the biblical enemy “...and Satan the Pope of evil Rome also came and proclaimed to all the nations believing in that stock of adultery” where once these Christians were gathered, “Satan came and mingled with the nations” specifically in order to take “evil counsel against the people of the Lord”.¹³⁸ Similarly, “Satan came to Ashdod to pillage Israel and Judah”, writes Ephraim of Bonn, in the form of Radulf the “wicked” who treacherously persecuted and “spoke evil of the Jews”, inciting others against them.¹³⁹ An “evil spirit came between the crusaders and the townsmen, and the misled ones rose up and slew the entire city, down to infant and suckling.”¹⁴⁰ This indiscriminate killing echoes Maimonides’ view that the “new sect” was intent on “wiping out every trace of the Jewish nation and religion”.¹⁴¹ Bar Simson describes how the Christians “intended to destroy us”, and that it was the main goal of their persecutors “to annihilate them”, in order that “the name of Israel might no longer be remembered”. This intention was made apparent in the slaughter of babies and pregnant women.¹⁴² Jewish writers describe the demonically possessed Christians as “the hands of wickedness” and “despicable errant oppressors” who pursued the children of Israel “to slay” them.¹⁴³

Bar Simson criticises the repeated failure of the bishops to protect Jews who fled to them for safety. They betrayed the Jews and sided with their persecutors as “the hearts of the bishop and his officers then changed toward them for evil”.¹⁴⁴ Despite the Church having initially promoted the toleration of Jews within Christendom and actively sought to protect them against the violence of the Crusades, official Church legislation grew less favourable towards the Jews after

¹³⁶ A Jewish perspective on Satan's perpetual hatred of Israel is based on the fact that it is through Israel that God would fulfil His program of redemption. See discussions on Satan as cause of Anti-Semitism: Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology*, 460-7, and Charles L. Feinberg, *The Curse of Anti-Semitism: its Cause, its Course, its Cure* (Emeth Publications, 1950).

¹³⁷ Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 138, 169.

¹³⁸ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 26; “Stock of adultery” was a derogatory reference to Jesus Christ reflecting a Jewish belief that he was conceived out of wedlock.

¹³⁹ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 121

¹⁴⁰ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 69.

¹⁴¹ Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, iii; Maimonides writes concerning the general intent in the formation of Christianity.

¹⁴² Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 22, 58.

¹⁴³ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 122-3; Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 56-7.

¹⁴⁴ Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 64.

the Third and Fourth Lateran Councils (1179 and 1215), when division between Jews and Christians deepened.¹⁴⁵ Jews were often repulsed by Christian symbols of worship, such as the cross, “the abominable sign”, symbols which represented the suffering caused by the Christians who wielded them “in the name of the crucified one.”¹⁴⁶

Ephraim of Bonn was aware of Christian disasters in the Holy Land, and this was seen as God’s vengeance upon “any evildoer who had laid a hand upon a Jew”, and through various means, “only a small number of the murderers-not even one out of a hundred- ever returned to their homeland.”¹⁴⁷ In the Abrahamic Covenant there is a principle which governs the relationship between Jews and Gentiles: those who bless the Jews will be blessed and those who curse them will be cursed.¹⁴⁸ During persecution, Jews went to Christians for help which suggests that positive relationships existed between Christians and Jews. Chazan writes that alongside Crusader cruelty, there was also evidence of Christian warmth. During the early stages of assaults, many Jews turned to their neighbours because they believed that they would find aid from them.¹⁴⁹ Ephraim records how when the “errant oppressors” advanced as they had done during the First Crusade, the Jews, “besought a Gentile acquaintance” to receive shelter.¹⁵⁰ A Jewish girl had played dead to save herself from her attackers until a “Gentile laundress” took her home to conceal her and there “saved her life.”¹⁵¹ Ultimately, God is credited as the one who rescued His chosen people, through the kindness of Gentiles and did not allow them to be destroyed: “Blessed is He Who granted them rescue”.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁵ *The Deeds of the Franks and Other Jerusalem-Bound Pilgrims: The Earliest Chronicle of the First Crusade*, ed. and trans. Nirmal Dass (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011), 19; Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 28, 138, 169; Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, 38; Kelser, “The Jew as the ‘Other’”, 177.

¹⁴⁶ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 122, 125; Solomon bar Simson, *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, 38-9, see also 32; Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, 174.

¹⁴⁷ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 131.

¹⁴⁸ Genesis 12:3, “I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonours you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed”; more broadly, to “dishonour”.

¹⁴⁹ Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 195.

¹⁵⁰ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 124-3.

¹⁵¹ Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 128.

¹⁵² Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, 128, 131.

Conclusion

The potential of scholarship like the lachrymose model of Jewish history to define Jews as fundamentally Other can potentially reduce them to passive objects, and perpetual victims of suffering. However, Jewish writers were not passive in their views of Christians. They disqualified Christian claims to religious truth and at the same time stressed Jewish religious superiority as part of their sense of identity. Christians were seen to have inherited a specific Jewish heresy since the founding of Rabbinic Judaism after A.D. 70. The competition for divine truth between the two faiths made it necessary that Christianity be denied the status of a monotheistic religion, to safeguard the Jews' identity as the original and true monotheists. Christianity's association with idolatry, based on Jewish understanding of their theology and worship of religious objects, signified a Jewish need to establish distance through difference. Catholic Christianity in particular was regarded as a spiritual pollution, due in part to its heretical teachings which were seen as the impetus behind violence and discrimination towards the Jew, which by the modern era would come to be branded as anti-Jewish. Destructive interactions with Christians were used by Jewish writers to create a greater sense of Jewish religious superiority at Christianity's expense. When disasters befell Jews at the hands of Christians, it was by God's hand as a result of their sins. Similarly, when Jews were protected by Christians, this was attributed to the grace of God. The relegation of Christians to the status of tools of the divine disqualified their claims of significance and removed power from their actions. Christian activities were seen in a Jewish light as the working out of God's relationship with His chosen people. Christian claims of Jewish suffering as proof of their own divine election provoked counter-narratives to strengthen Jewish identity as the true elect, explaining their suffering in specifically Jewish terms which emphasized their special relationship with God who would one day restore them.

The use of the Other by Jewish writers reveals how Jews actively shaped their identity in a more active and complex way than Orientalizing stereotypes portrayed. According to Goetz and Wood, attitudes towards the Other reveal concepts of Self, a process whereby the perception of the Other sharpens identity.¹⁵³ Seen through this lens, Jewish identity and the ways it was constructed can be better understood. Said writes how the Orient helped to define Europe as its

¹⁵³ Goetz and Wood, *'Otherness' in the Middle Ages*, 24.

“contrasting image”. In the same way the Christian Other can be said to have helped define Jewish identity, being used as a mirror image to reinforce Jewish exclusivity as an elect religion and a chosen people.¹⁵⁴ Jewish self-perception inherently coloured how other nations were seen. The ethnic status of Christians as Gentiles strengthened Jewish resistance to assimilation, portraying Christians as different and distanced from Judaism. Jews imposed a degree of self-othering, considering themselves as outsiders to maintain their distinct cultural practices and to delineate boundaries of identity. This ‘inward acculturation’ protected Jewish culture from outside influences, and produced alternate negative and objectified images of the Christian religion. Through these strategies, Jewish writers countered the Christian claim to religious superiority and safeguarded their special position. In light of these findings, the lachrymose model itself may be seen more positively, not as Orientalism, but as a testimony to the resilience of Jewish identity, sustained in part by a Jewish strategy of othering. The various forms of the Christian Other were successfully utilized by Jewish writers to reinforce their identity amidst events which sought to destroy it. These images of the Other were more complex and nuanced than traditional binaries depicted them to be, and in fact, Jewish strategies of othering are markedly similar to those of other faiths.

¹⁵⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, 9-10.

Conclusion

This research set out to understand how people belonging to the three main monotheistic faiths viewed each other in the medieval period. It explored how and why Jews, Muslims and Christians possessed these attitudes during the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, an era of particular strife between them, and how they perceived people of rival faiths as the Other. The concept of othering, and of post-colonial Orientalism, has often been used by modern writers to describe a process by which one group of people builds its own sense of identity by defining itself against an identity it creates for another group. But this can oversimplify the interactions that occurred between peoples in the past if it is assumed that othering only took place in binary oppositions or in a one-way direction. The use of Said's *Orientalism* can propagate and contribute to the very faults of essentialism it criticizes. This thesis examined the perspectives of three monotheistic groups in order to minimize a rigidly binary interpretation of othering, and to attempt a broader, holistic understanding of the process in this period.

Othering: creating difference

Goetz and Wood remark on the multifaceted nature of the Other where the other may take many different forms.¹ These forms went beyond the binary distinction between East and West which were not common amongst medieval writers. Nations were seen to possess various defining characteristics and these were utilized to form a number of stereotypes to construct the Other.² These stereotypes were derived from a predominately religious basis. The main aim in creating the Other was to sharpen the Self's identity. Groups were defined by what divided them from others, inextricably linking the notions of Self and Other in building a sense of group identity.³ The Other served to define a group's identity by creating a "contrasting image" imbued with

¹ Goetz and Wood, *Otherness in the Middle Ages*, 12, 20.

² Murray, "National Identity, Language and Conflict in the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1096-1192," 110.

³ Yıldız, "The Other, Otherness and Othering in the Middle Ages," 2.

immoral and negative characteristics which were not associated with the Self. When medieval writers wrote about their respective mirror Other, they revealed a lot about their own self-image.⁴

Jewish identity was influenced by the nations they lived amongst. In particular, Jewish communities could develop robust barriers against the threat of persecution from Christian neighbours. Jewish writers used the Jewish binary division of the world into 'Jews' and 'non-Jews' to safeguard Jewish communities from assimilation. Jews valued their unique identity, and actively separated themselves from Gentiles in order to preserve their distinctiveness. For Jews, this distinctiveness was a sign of their special identity as God's chosen people. Jewish reactions against Christian claims to religious superiority over Judaism solidified their identity, where Jewish writers disassociated Judaism from Christianity, portraying it as an inferior mirror image of the 'true' faith.

Christianity equally defined itself with reference to the Jewish Other. It was shaped by its religious Jewish origins, but the Jewish Other served as an inferior faith which was used to grant Christianity divine legitimacy. Similarly, the Muslim Other served as a mirror opposite of Christian virtue to reinforce Christianity's sense of piety. As Akbari argues, defining Islam was a way to indirectly define the Christian Self.⁵ The abundance of stereotypical writings reveals how much Christendom's self-identity was shaped by the dynamic presence of the Muslim Other.

For Muslims, their religious identity was more sharply delineated by presenting Christianity as an obsolete, inferior revelation. The status of *dhimmīs*, along with other rules to enforce difference, was a constant reminder of this inferiority. Christianity was tolerated to serve as a contrasting 'negative image' to reinforce the superiority of Muslim identity. Difference was stressed to create a distinction between an inferior and superior religious revelation. The constant presence of Christianity gave Muslim writers an Other in which to contrast and ultimately shape the identity of Muslims.

⁴ Goetz and Wood, *Otherness in the Middle Ages*, 24.

⁵ Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 280.

Othering: similarities

Despite the efforts each group made to differentiate themselves from one another, there were commonalities in the strategies and techniques of othering employed by all medieval writers. It is ironic that the three faiths each constructed their pinnacle of difference, the Other, in similar ways. The monotheistic core of their faiths perhaps determined the form that otherness was to take, for it was fundamentally necessary to defend their own sense of a monotheistic Self. All faiths viewed each other's faith as a threat, specifically in terms of conversion and identity due to the religious exclusivity of monotheism. The competition fostered by this threat presented by other beliefs meant that narratives within each group were required to reinforce its own legitimacy with God in relation to other groups.

Each faith used the negative image of paganism to present the other monotheistic group as illegitimate. This had the dual effect of denigrating a group's monotheistic rival while reinforcing the group's own legitimacy as the 'true' monotheistic faith. Christian writers in particular regularly depicted Muslims as pagans. Tolan's argument concerning the Christian writers' use of the pagan Other as an "essential foil" for Christian virtue is also relevant with respect to Jewish and Muslim writers who in turn perceived Christians as idolatrous, interpreting the worship of Jesus as God as blasphemous, and the concept of a triune God as paganism.⁶ The Christian association with paganism helped Muslim and Jewish writers to set themselves apart as a superior religion.

The peoples of other faiths were also commonly regarded as profane and spiritually defiling. The concept of Christian impurity and overt association with unclean things, such as pigs, contrasted them with Muslim purity and served to denigrate Christianity to a place below Islam. The Crusaders' polluting conquest of holy sites and territory was thought to render these lands inhospitable for Muslims. These narratives are similar to Crusade preaching which propagated the image of the filthy Saracen as animal-like, defiling holy churches in the East, and profaning the Holy Land with spiritual uncleanness. The transformation of mosques into churches rather than into stables for animals was, ironically, the Muslim equivalent: since Christians were 'pigs',

⁶ Tolan, *Saracens*, 129.

churches were places for animals. Jewish writers included stories of heroic actions taken by Jews to preserve the purity of their monotheism against the pollution of forced baptism.

Jews, Muslims and Christians also perceived each other as immoral, prone to greed and easily enticed by monetary gain rather than a moral incentive. Jewish writers' portrayal of moral laxity and greed of Christian religious authorities compared to Jews further compounded the inferiority of Christianity. Amongst Christian writers, the image of the Jew became increasingly associated with moneylending and wickedness. Muslim writers also regarded the Crusades as motivated by avarice. In instances where Muslim writers identified Muslims as morally deficient, they used comparisons with Christianity, the inferior faith, as a tool to admonish them. The accusation of 'Jew' also became a censure applied by Christian writers towards fellow Christians whose behaviour mimicked the spiritually and morally inferior Jews.

Jews, Christians and Muslims denigrated each other by portraying the Other as influenced by the devil. Both the Christian Church and Islam were portrayed as worthy vessels of the devil which were used to destroy Jewish and Christian communities. This association with the 'opposite side' was evident in chosen nomenclature. The Muslim Other was denigrated as an 'antichrist' and 'evil enemies'; likewise Christians were labelled by Muslims writers as 'infidels' and 'enemies of God'. Jewish writers also named their Christian enemies as 'wicked' and 'evil'. However, their use of specific Christian terms such as 'the crucified one' carried anti-Jewish connotations which could be seen as serving as the equivalent for the Christian term of 'antichrist'.

Negative characteristics could be extended to the key figures of the other faith. Muhammad came to embody the negative stereotypes ascribed to the Muslim Other. He was portrayed as a false prophet whose doctrine came from satanic origins and embodied the lustfulness associated with the East which contrasted with the Christian virtue of celibacy. Similarly, in Jewish writings, the othering of Christianity was assisted in its connection with Yeshua who came to be associated with immorality and sorcery, accused of seducing the people of Israel in much the same way that Muhammad was accused by Christian writers of seducing all who believed in his heresy. For Jewish writers, Jesus embodied all that was not Jewish which acted as a buffer against Christian influences to convert. The contrasting mirror image of these figures denigrated the rival faith which made their own appear more righteous.

Goetz and Wood state how the demarcation of Others could include an appropriation of knowledge.⁷ The peoples of all three faiths asserted their possession of superior knowledge. Christianity's ability to 'see' spiritual truth granted them superiority over the interpretations of the 'blind' Jews. Similarly, Christians knew 'the truth' behind Muhammad's deceptions which granted them a sense of superiority. Jews saw themselves as possessing an undistorted 'authentic' truth, while Muslims perceived their divine knowledge as 'uncorrupted' compared to Christianity. The Muslim writers' 'appropriation' of Christianity's knowledge was refuted but also assimilated, in a manner reminiscent of Said's argument of the West's assimilation of the Orient. The authority of the Bible was initially used to legitimize the supremacy of Islam's monotheism over Christianity and Judaism. Likewise, Christianity may be seen as appropriating aspects of Jewish Scripture to the Church, adopting scriptures referring to 'Israel' and the 'children of God', approaching these terms allegorically rather than literally.

There were correlations between Christianity and Islam regarding the narratives of supersession and the assumption that the 'correct' revelation was wilfully ignored by the older faith. The accusations that Jews hid mentions of Christ and Christian doctrine from the Old Testament is similar to Islam's accusations against Christianity for omitting mentions of Muhammad from the New Testament. The Christian 'replacement' of Israel with the Church in Old Testament texts is also comparable to the Muslim rewriting of Scripture to include mentions of Muhammad. Christian claims to Jewish elements caused Jewish writers to ridicule Christian doctrine as polytheistic in order to protect their identity as the original, true monotheistic faith. The strongest Jewish response to these narratives was their steadfast commitment to monotheism to the point of death. This became a significant witness to the 'correctness' of their particular faith, an action which caused local Christians to doubt the validity of their own faith. These actions of solidarity strengthened Jewish communities in their identities as custodians of the true faith.

The creation of myths that denied a voice to the Other was a process that Muslims, Christians and Jews all participated in. Fictitious writing concerning Muslim beliefs within Christendom served not only to disparage Muslim beliefs but also to reaffirm Christian superiority.⁸ As Said writes, Christian writers "handled" Islam and the more they wrote reproaching it the more Islam

⁷ Goetz and Wood, *Otherness in the Middle Ages*, 12.

⁸ Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 301.

was reduced as a potential threat.⁹ The portrayal of Muslims as the Other rendered them an inert object, simultaneously harmless and useful to Christians.¹⁰ The significant absence of Muhammad in Christian Scripture required Muslim writers to “domesticate” Christianity as corrupt and erroneous. This defamed Christian knowledge as inferior in order that Islam could be regarded as sole possessor of superior knowledge and revelation.

The corruption of Scripture was also used by Muslim writers to explain how Jesus was regarded so differently in Christianity and caused it to stray from monotheism and become tainted with polytheism in the worship of Jesus as deity and belief in the Trinity. Likewise, Jewish production of parodic versions of Christian doctrine, such as *toldedot yeshu*, served to “neutralize” and denigrate Christian interpretations of Scripture as inferior while reinforcing their own knowledge as superior. As a minority group living within Christendom, Jewish writers created intellectual barriers against the majority they lived amidst. This was partially done through an ‘inward acculturation’ which transformed aspects of Christian cultural characteristics into othered forms. Conversely, Christian writers mirrored Islam’s claim as the superior revelation by claiming divine adoption over Judaism which provided Christian writers with a spiritually inferior model. The Muslim Other possessed a corrupted version of Christianity, influenced by heresy and a false prophet which delegitimized its existence.

Jesus was a subject on which all three faiths had a unique view and was one of the most prominent differences between the three faiths. The ‘correct’ portrayals of Jesus became a focus in legitimizing the faiths of all three peoples, and connected with this, their claims to true monotheism. These groups shaped themselves against opposing arguments where each faith’s opinion on Jesus helped to determine their unique monotheistic identities. In particular, the form of Rabbinic Judaism and Islam identities were influenced by the presence of Christianity, responding to its doctrine by making themselves, and it, as dissimilar as they could.

Jews, Muslims and Christians preferred to die and exalt their faith rather than convert under duress by their enemies. However, Christians and Jews valued suffering as proof of divine election which made them worthy in God’s sight. This contrasted with Islam, who saw their success in battle and freedom from suffering as evidence of God’s support for Islam and their

⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 59.

¹⁰ Tolan, *Saracens*, xx, xxiii.

jihad over Christianity. In a similar manner, Christianity looked upon Jewish exilic suffering as proof of God's disownment of, and the Church's election over, the Jewish people. Conversely, when viewed beside Islam, Christianity claimed to hold the monopoly over righteous suffering, which was regarded as greater than what had been endured by the biblical Jews. However, when the Crusaders were successful in battle, material success became the criterion of divine justification. When Christians were defeated, it was attributed to their own sinfulness as God's chastisement of His elect people, and Muslim victories became negligible in comparison to Christianity's established heavenly victory in eternity. Successes were viewed as the result of God's favour; God could equally exercise divine judgment upon the errant faith physically in the form of epilepsy (Muhammad), leprosy (Baldwin IV) and death in war (Crusaders). In any case, suffering came from God and not the othered enemy. Muslims became an objectified tool of the divine to explain away Christian defeats as temporary. Likewise, persecution by Christians was also used by Jewish writers to strengthen Jewish religious identity. The preservation of the Jewish people was attributed to God as a mark of His favour. Acts of kindness by Christians or Christian kings were seen as the outworking of this divine favour, and evidence of God acting on behalf of His people. Individual merit was denied these Christians who sympathized with Jewish suffering, and their perceived uncharacteristic acts on behalf of Jews were credited to God.

The long-standing narrative of suffering was incorporated into Jewish identity. The 'lachrymose model' is testament to this suffering identity. But the 'Orientalist' interpretation of the lachrymose model is insufficient to capture the full sense of Jewish identity that emerges during the medieval period. Far from adopting an image of victims and passive subjects of Christian othering, Jews adopted their own othering strategies that turned the interpretation of events to their favour to bolster Jewish identity in ways that proved the Jews to be active participants in history. The affluence of Christendom in comparison to Jewish circumstances was part of this suffering narrative. An awareness of Christian polemics incited Jewish writers to explain their suffering in light of perceived Christian gloating. Exilic suffering at the hands of Gentiles in the end served a Jewish purpose as a sign that the messianic age was at hand where all Gentiles would acknowledge the truth of Judaism. Similarly, Muslims also held to the prospect of the other faith realizing the truth of Islam, echoed by the Christian view of Judaism's future acknowledgement of the truth of Christianity.

Othering: ambivalence, parallels and interactions

The presence of comparable othering strategies among Jews, Christians and Muslims points to a further dimension of similarity between them. The post-colonial theories of Homi Bhabha suggest that similarities between cultures can be hidden by what he terms as necessary concepts of difference. For Bhabha, cultures interact and transform each other in a manner that goes beyond binary distinctions. A 'third space' in-between cultures can be identified, where commonalities exist and are exchanged between groups, and through which othering itself becomes a common trait shared by these groups. The three faiths may be seen as shaping each other's identities through the rhetorical strategies they used to distinguish themselves from each other which ultimately created commonalities between them. In regards to the Jews as Other, rather than isolated and remaining perpetually the same, Jews and Christians existed in a "third space", a place of cultural hybridity and ambivalence, where both Jews and Christians influenced one another's sense of identity. Furthermore, the adoption of Jesus by Islam may be seen as a kind of hybridization between cultures, as Bhabha described it, a partial representation of the Christian version rather than a complete adoption.

The perpetual presence of the 'inferior' faith within Christian and Muslim societies in fact aided othering strategies. It gave them a level of legitimacy and identity that would not have been possible had the other faith not been present. According to Staszak, the Other can appear to be valued, but this is done in a stereotypical manner that bolsters superiority in the Self.¹¹ The need for a Jewish Other was to a degree necessary to justify the Church. Augustine's order for the Jews as a witness to the world, as echoed by Bernard of Clairvaux, similarly existed amongst Jews who saw the other faith's existence as a Gentile witness for the truth of their own faith. This is particularly true within the context of Muslim lands where the presence of *dhimmīs*, were a constant reminder of Islam's religious superiority.

Goetz and Wood note the many nuanced potentials of otherness.¹² Amidst the parallels, each group in some manner found positives in the othered group which limited their potential demonization as Other. Among Christian writers, Saracens could be wise and virtuous, and Jews

¹¹ Staszak, "Other/otherness," 1-7.

¹² Goetz and Wood, *Otherness in the Middle Ages*, 23-4.

provided them with the Scriptures, and served as a witness, for Jesus also had been a Jew. Muslims observed Christian virtues and kindness, while Jews mentioned instances of Christian compassion towards the persecuted Jewish communities. The image of Muslims presented by scholars such as Edward Said did not explore the complex reality of Muslim alterity. Muslim writers' nuanced perception of Christianity was influenced by near and far Christian populations which categorized Christianity as both barbarous and respectable. Though sharing a similar religious heritage which fostered a level of co-existence, Christianity was portrayed as strictly inferior to Islam. These attitudes towards Christianity could range from religious tolerance to intolerance, especially during the Crusades. Christians were capable of acts of kindness towards Muslims, and these were portrayed as devious attempts to convert the faithful and seduce them away from the truth of Islam.

The Jewish Other was also a nuanced image in Christian writing. Jews were both regarded as privileged as the origin of Christianity and condemned for simultaneously rejecting it. Christian perceptions identified the blindness of the Jewish people which helped to place them into a homogenous group separate from Christianity, characterized by their persistent unbelief. However, Jews were also objects for mercy and prayer in order to bring about their eventual salvation. Though Jews were shamed for their associative murder of Christ, Christians could be simultaneously shamed for their murder of Jews. Though narratives could be positive and well-meaning, these could also relegate Jews to being objectified stereotypes which furthered their inferior image. Ultimately, the Jewish Other served to benefit Christian superiority, which had become increasingly evident as the Church detached itself from its Jewish origins and relied less upon the Jews for its religious legitimacy.

Jewish writers also noted the potential for Christians to act uncharacteristically against their prescribed image as Other. On the onset of persecution, Jews had sought refuge from crusading Christians amongst Christian neighbours. Unexpected help had also come in the form of local Christians who sheltered Jews during times of violence. The preaching of Bernard of Clairvaux on behalf of the Jews to stop violence was also an instance which had surprised Jewish writers. Though such instances were attributed to the mercy of God for the preservation of the Jewish people, these occurrences were recorded amongst depictions of the same people as Other.

Ultimately, the Gentiles served a positive purpose as components in bringing about the messianic age that would change Jewish prospects for the better.

Othering: change over time

Goetz and Wood argue that Others are not stable, and that differences over time should not be ignored.¹³ Nirmal Dass notes individual concepts of otherness can be lost over time.¹⁴ Identity is constantly changing, the Self is not static, so the Other need not remain perpetually Other. Muslim views of Christians were initially tolerant as 'People of the Book', but over time this changed to the extent that Christians could become infidels. With the advent of the Crusades, Christians could justly be seen as forsaken by God as warfare against Muslims made Christians easier to Other as enemies of Islam deserving of denigration. This thesis has also attempted to give some sense of the changes in viewpoints among these peoples between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.

During the Crusades, deprecatory writings about the Muslim became more abundant. The Crusades became part of a spiritual narrative that claimed Christian ownership over divine truth and defended Christian identity from the spiritual pollution that was integrated into narratives against Muslims, which gave further justification for violent crusading. Negative perceptions of the Muslim Other were intensified by the preaching of the Crusades to become an engrained dichotomy that has continued into the present day.

Similarly, the image of the inferior Jewish Other was propagated through the Crusade with claims that God did even greater feats for His 'new' chosen people. The Christian image of the Jewish Other would over time turn increasingly into negative stereotyping and a unique brand of hatred which would form the basis for what modern scholars would call Christian anti-Semitism. The image of the Jewish Other created by Christian writers went beyond establishing religious superiority and identity in their use of the Jewish Other, and moved from a passive othering to a more intentional demonization of Jews. By the thirteenth century, the Jews were increasingly

¹³ Goetz and Wood, *Otherness in the Middle Ages*, 19.

¹⁴ Nirmal Dass, "Temporary Otherness and Homiletic History in the Late Carolingian Age: A Reading of the *Bella Parisiaca Urbis* of Abbo of Saint-Germain-Des-Prés," in *Difference and Identity in Francia and Medieval France*, ed. Meredith Cohen and Justine Firnhaber-Baker (Ashgate, 2010), 102.

established as an Other, made up of a majority of negative stereotypes which translated into increasingly extreme acts of violence later seen in the period of the Black Death in the fourteenth century, and well beyond.

Conclusion and further research

Jews, Christians and Muslims shaped each other's identities both through conflict and interaction. In their attempts to highlight their different identities by creating Others, they ended up revealing how similar they were. This research has shown that more similarities existed in the writings of medieval authors about other peoples than the differences they each sought to establish. Othering was a two-way practice between groups, whether they were aware of this or not. After all, as Said writes, 'boundaries' formed in the mind did not require the Other to affirm them.¹⁵ The similarities in othering strategies employed by medieval writers of all three faiths exemplify a two-way flow in the process of othering. Othering did not just flow from "West" towards the "East". Othering was not a practice limited to one group, as though one group was the oppressor and the other a victim. Said's Orientalism was often one-sided which deprived the Other of their voice.¹⁶ Hermes observed that the Other and othering cannot be considered the idea or strategy of any one particular culture.¹⁷ Goetz and Wood also noted how othering is usually mutual. Though not necessarily for the same reasons, those who regard others as the Other are likely regarded by them in turn as the Other.¹⁸

Said notes the universal nature of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is "ours" and an unfamiliar space beyond which is "theirs".¹⁹ The Other need not be constrained as a modern concept, but may be discovered within all of human history. Robert Irwin notes, the basic concepts of "us" and "them" were already in place at the time of Herodotus, and these distinctions are in fact "common to all times and places".²⁰ Hillenbrand writes it was the "natural tendency" for people of one group "to form stereotypical images of the Other".²¹ The prevalence

¹⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 54.

¹⁶ Schaller, "Crusader Orientalism", 3.

¹⁷ Hermes, *The [European] Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture*, 176.

¹⁸ Goetz and Wood, *Otherness in the Middle Ages*, 26; Nadhiri, *Saracens and Franks*, 196.

¹⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 54.

²⁰ Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge*, 11.

²¹ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 268.

and commonality of this practice amongst the three groups discussed in this thesis indeed illustrates how othering was not restricted to any one group. Understanding that all people have the capacity to practice othering, and not just some, is a significant realization to help prevent and to mend wounds inflicted in the past. Further research on perspectives of Muslims and Jews towards each other, though, would help towards a fuller understanding of reciprocal attitudes of all three groups towards each other. More research could also be done in exploring the diversity that existed within each perspective such as the Byzantine, Shiite or Karaite perspectives towards the Other in the medieval period. This thesis has also taken a broad time period, and as Heng, Goetz and Wood caution, there is a danger of oversimplifying the complexities of particular episodes and changes over time to othering.

Nevertheless, at a general level, a study of medieval forms of othering has wider implications that are relevant to the present. With respect to relations between Christians, Jews and Muslims, understanding the origins of conflict between them may help to heal wounds in the present. An awareness of how ever-present the processes of marginalization has been in the past, may also help us to identify the same dynamics at work in the modern world, as well as its dangers, and help us to move beyond the setting up of ‘us’ vs ‘them’ dichotomies. However, an awareness of the past leads to the realization that these clashes of diversity, like the employment of othering, prove to be a common feature of history. The ‘need’ for othering in the past determines its continued presence in history. For example, if not the Muslims or the Byzantines or the Jews, the crusading Christians of the West would have found another group of some difference to mirror themselves against to give themselves identity.²² The object and specific form that otherness takes can change over time, yet the general human impetus to Other continues. Instances where othering manifests in violence may also show how difficult it is to avoid othering in the present. The tendencies which lead to stereotyping, dehumanizing and predisposing of groups against one another will in all likelihood occur again and again, yet this is a matter over which people do have a choice. An awareness of the mutual dependency and shared humanity surrounding the use of the Other in the past may lessen the intensity and degree of its occurrence in the future.

²² Nicholas Morton, *Encountering Islam on the First Crusade* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 273, 276-7.

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