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CHAPTER 5

JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM IN MIEVEAL EUROPE

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IN 1339, there appeared in Paris the Latin work *Epistola rabbi Samuel de Fez de aduentu Messiae missa ad rabbi Isaac* (Letter of Rabbi Samuel of Fez to Rabbi Isaac about the Coming of the Messiah), which takes the form of letters between two rabbis in Morocco who explore and ultimately affirm the truth of the Christian religion. The work became the most widely known anti-Jewish polemic in Europe in the later Middle Ages, surviving in hundreds of manuscripts and many editions. Yet curiously, its preface states that the Latin text is not original, but was instead translated from Arabic (Alfonsi Bonihominis, 2020: 71). The purported ‘translator’, a Dominican friar named Alfonso Buenhombre (or Bonihomnis, d. c.1353), makes the same claim for most of his works, alleging that his writings were translations of Arabic texts that had long been hidden by Jews. As he says in his later work *Disputatio Abutalib Sarraceni et Samuelis Iudei* (Disputation of Abutalib the Sarracen and Samuel the Jew), these works fortuitously ‘came into my hands ... while in the captivity of the Saracens’ (Alfonsi Bonihominis, 2020: 123; Szpiech, 2013b: 170). Despite his claims, however, the content of the works reveals them to be his own compositions.

It is significant that Buenhombre seeks to establish the authenticity of his Christian anti-Jewish polemic by appealing to a foreign, Arabic pedigree. It is equally striking that the *Epistola* circulated so widely throughout Europe, being copied and read by multitudes of Christian readers who rarely, if ever, crossed paths with real Jews or Muslims. This example underscores the fact that Christian thinking about Judaism was not simplistic or static, but instead evolved as times changed. While Judaism has played an important role in Christian thought and belief since the very origins of Christianity, Christian ideas about Judaism were shaped both by internal shifts in ecclesiastical governance and structure as well as by external shifts in social, political, and economic circumstances. The collapse of the Roman Empire in the fifth century opened

a window of opportunity for Christianity's expanding role as a force of continuity and social organization in the early Middle Ages. However, the rise of Islam in the seventh century affected the course of that expansion in multiple, very distinctive, ways. Islamic civilization not only provided a context for the growth of Jewish settlements in the Mediterranean but also eventually pressured Christian thinking about prophecy and salvation to develop in new directions. After the twelfth century, Christian thought sometimes came to engage with Judaism in ways that included Islamic thought as well.

This chapter examines relations between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in medieval Europe, focusing on the ways that religious ideas intersected with and influenced notions of history and society. The story of this interaction is a multifaceted one, unfolding as much in the realm of political, social, and economic thought as in that of theology. To comprehend the history of interaction between these groups, it is important to go beyond a summary of their conflicts and cooperation and take into account the theological understandings that often determined these interactions.

JEWES REAL AND IMAGINED

The relationship between Judaism and Christianity throughout the Middle Ages was founded upon the language of the New Testament itself. The condemnation of Pharisaic literalism and the calls to embrace a 'new covenant' that 'has made the first one obsolete' (Hebrews 8:13) provided a foundation for the ecclesiastical doctrine of Supersessionism, which holds that Christianity has inherited the status of God's chosen people, the True Israel, by keeping the faith that Judaism failed to uphold (Reuther, 1974: 164, 239). Yet this doctrine posed the challenge for Patristic authors of how to accept the truth of the old law while also justifying its replacement. This issue was addressed by Augustine of Hippo (d. 430), who elaborated the exegetical notion that earlier Scriptures were 'figures' (*figurae*) of later ones. To read such signs required not only a literal view of history but also a symbolic and 'spiritual' understanding. From this perspective, Christians came to characterize Jewish thought, focused on the history of the Jewish people, as 'carnal' and earthbound and Jews as blind to the true, figural meaning of their own books. This caricature was repeated for centuries in Christian theology and was expressed in the iconography of *Ecclesia* (Church) and *Synagoga* (Synagogue)—both depicted as fair women, but with the former shown triumphant and the latter blindfolded and crestfallen (Schreckenberg, 1996: 32–63).

In elaborating this Christian exegetical theory, Augustine gave definitive form to what Jeremy Cohen and others have termed the 'hermeneutical Jew', the medieval view of Jews as necessary but inferior readers and copiers of Hebrew Scripture (Cohen, 1999: 2–3). This notion became widespread in subsequent centuries, when Jews were likened to 'scribes' (*notarii*), 'book-carrying slaves' (*capsarii*), 'guardians' (*custodes*), 'librarians' (*librarii*), or 'archivists' (*scriniarii*)—all figures who copy or protect books without themselves reading or understanding them (36, 235). The exegetical notion

of the 'hermeneutical Jew' remained a common topos in Western Christian thought throughout the Middle Ages (Dahan, 1990: 585; Cohen, 1999: 15) and historians have demonstrated that its traces are still perceptible in modern debates about idealism, legalism, capitalism, and materialism (Nirenberg, 2013: 6).

Augustine argued, moreover, that Jews are not only poor readers of Scripture, but are also valuable 'witnesses' to a truth that they themselves are incapable of comprehending. This theory had implications for Christian policies concerning real Jews living in Christian lands in subsequent centuries. Augustine's reading of Psalm 59:11 (numbered 58:12 in the Septuagint and the Vulgate, 'Slay them not lest at any time they forget your law') came to provide a template for how to understand the doctrine of 'Jewish witness' in practical terms (Fredriksen, 2008: 349). This verse would be cited seven centuries later by the French abbot Bernard of Clairvaux, in the context of the Second Crusade to claim the Holy Land from Muslim control. In a letter of 1146, Bernard urges fellow Christians to 'take up arms in zeal for the Christian name' but at the same time recalls the atrocities that occurred in the context of the First Crusade when, in 1096, Christian crusaders killed many hundreds of Jews in the Rhineland (Eidenberg, 1977: 13–14). Bernard thus cautions that, 'the Jews must not be persecuted, slaughtered, nor even driven out ... I know what is written in the Psalms as prophecy about the Jews ... They are living signs (*vivi apices*) for us, representing the Lord's passion' (Allen and Amt, 2014: 127). Bernard's words testify to the enduring legacy of Augustine's exegetical stance towards Judaism in medieval Christian thought.

The Augustinian call to 'slay them not' also came to have a direct impact on the statutes concerning Jews in canon law. In June 598, Pope Gregory I the Great (590–604) wrote to Victor, Bishop of Palermo, responding to reports of forcible conversion of Jews in Sicily. Paraphrasing the Theodosian code (16.8.18), he urged that 'Just as the Jews should not (*sicut Iudaeis non*) have license to do in their synagogues more than the law permits, so they should suffer no limitation on what they are allowed to do' (Grayzel, 1966: 1:93; Stow, 1999: 216). This statement, known by its opening words '*sicut Iudaeis non*', was repeated in a bull by Pope Calixtus II (1119–24) in 1120 and then again by more than a dozen popes from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. Sometimes called the *Constitutio pro iudaeis* (Regulation on Behalf of the Jews), it was incorporated into the *Decretum* of Gratian—a foundational work of Western canon law that first appeared around 1140—providing a legal expression of the theological doctrine of toleration that can be traced back to Gregory (Dahan, 1990: 114).

Although the doctrine expressed in *Sicut Iudaeis non* became a norm in medieval thought, it was not equally influential in all places. In Visigothic Iberia, for example, existing policies about Jews and Judaism in Christian society were notably more hostile than elsewhere in Europe. St Leander (d. 601), bishop of Seville, convened the Third Council of Toledo in 589, which barred Jews from public offices of power over Christians, prohibited them from having Christian wives or slaves, and decreed that children with at least one Christian parent were required to be baptized (Vives, 1963: 129, 135). Two decades after Gregory's pronouncement, King Sisebut (c.565–621) ordered the forcible baptism of all Jews in his kingdom. At the Fourth Council of Toledo of 633, overseen by

Leander's brother, Bishop Isidore of Seville (d. 636), earlier forced baptisms were upheld as valid and binding, although future ones were forbidden (Vives, 1963: 211). Isidore's work *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos* (On the Christian Faith against the Jews), which became very well known in Latin Europe, was harshly critical of Jewish faith (Cohen, 1999: 97). Together, the disparate stances of Gregory and Isidore exemplify the contradictory ideals inherited as part of the Augustinian legacy.

BETWEEN MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN RULE

One of the most striking elements of Jewish–Christian contact in medieval Europe is the great disparity between the ubiquitous presence of Judaism in Christian theological writing and the overall scarcity of real Jews in Christian lands. Judaism existed as a figure of Christian thought more than a reality in Christian daily life. Most Jewish communities in Europe were very small and not always well defined because, before the thirteenth century, Jews were not generally pressured to live in specific neighbourhoods or limited to particular areas of settlement (Ravid, 2008: 8–9, 11).

Moreover, before the second millennium CE the majority of Jews worldwide did not live in Europe at all but were concentrated largely in the Islamic world, in addition to some older Jewish settlements in Byzantium. According to the Spanish traveller Benjamin of Tudela (d. 1173), there were sizeable Jewish communities in Thebes, Salonika, and Constantinople, all of which were long-established (Benjamin of Tudela, 1907: 11–14; De Lange, 2018: 81–2, 85). As Robert Chazan notes, however, the notion that the settlement of Jews throughout Europe followed shortly after the Roman destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE is anachronistic. In the diaspora, Jews did not follow Christianity directly westward through the empire but instead expanded more to the east of Palestine and into Mesopotamia, where, between the third and seventh centuries, they consolidated rabbinical tradition and law in the Talmud (Chazan, 2010: 10). Those Jewish settlements that were established in southern Italy and Iberia, which were some of Europe's largest, soon came under the dominion of Muslim civilization. In the territories of Charlemagne (King of the Franks from 768; King of the Lombards from 774, and Holy Roman Emperor from 800 to 814), Jewish merchants were encouraged to do business, and—on the basis of existing Roman precedent—rights of worship and other protections were granted, despite the hostility of some local clergy. A few Jews even served in high stations in his administration, such as Isaac, Charlemagne's emissary to the Abbasid Caliph Harūn al-Rashīd (r. 786–809), who famously brought back from Baghdad the caliph's gift of an elephant named 'Abū al-Abbās' (Benbassa, 1999: 7–9). Jewish communities grew under Charlemagne and his son, Louis the Pious (r. 813–40). Charlemagne was remembered in later Ashkenazi legends as a benevolent sovereign, whose policies toward Jews in his realm are noteworthy, given that he is also known to have forcibly converted the Saxons to Christianity (Fletcher, 1997: 216).

Outside of Iberia, southern Italy, and Sicily, pockets of Jewish settlement in western Europe could be found along the northern shores of the Mediterranean, including modest communities in Narbonne, a few other places in the Languedoc, and a very old community in Rome. Further inland, Europe's Jewish population remained sparse in the early Middle Ages. A very early reference to Jewish activity in Central Europe was given in the writing of Iberian Jew Ibrāhīm ibn Ya'qūb al-Isrā'īlī al-Ṭurṭūshī (d. 997), who visited Prague around 965 as part of a trip through Central Europe (including a visit to Emperor Otto I, r. 936-73), perhaps undertaken at the behest of the Córdoba Caliph al-Ḥakam II (r. 961-76). He mentions Jewish traders among numerous merchant groups in the bustling city (Bažant, Bažantová, and Starn, 2010: 14). Yet only after the year 1000 did the Jewish population begin to grow appreciably in Central Europe, when small Jewish communities of merchants began to form in the Rhineland (in towns such as Mainz, Cologne, Worms, and Speyer) (Marcus, 1987: 182), as well as in Bohemia. As Chazan argues, in Europe 'the notion of significant and stable Christian-Jewish interaction over the past two millennia is unsustainable' (Chazan, 2010: 9).

As a result, the preponderate, albeit ambivalent, attention paid to Judaism in Christian thought was not matched by any reciprocal Jewish interest. In fact, examples of Jewish discussions of Christianity before the first millennium—which originate in Babylonia, not Europe—are, on the whole, rare and telegraphic. The Talmud contains only select references to Christianity, offering 'counternarratives' (Schäfer, 2007: 8) to the presentation of Jesus in early Christian sources. A similarly negative portrayal, asserting Jesus was the illegitimate son of a Roman soldier, is found in the scurrilous pseudo-biography of Jesus known as the *Toledot Yeshu* (Life Story/Genealogy of Jesus) (Meerson, Schäfer, and Deutsch, 2014: 28-40). By contrast, the few Jews living in Europe in the early Middle Ages did not, either out of ignorance or prudence, produce abundant writing about Christianity, although they did read some eastern texts. In the early ninth century, notice of the *Toledot Yeshu* reached the attention of a few European Christians like Agobard, Archbishop of Lyons (d. 840), who responded with critical intensity (Cohen, 1999: 131; Meerson, Schäfer, and Deutsch, 2014: 3-4).

The emergence of Islam in the early seventh century and its rapid spread, both westward across North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula and eastward across Central Asia as far as the Indus River, provided a context in which Judaism and Christianity were distinguished from other religious groups. Jews and Christians (as well as Zoroastrians) were recognized by Muslims as *ahl al-kitāb* ('People of the Book'), a qur'ānic expression denoting—often with ambivalence—those monotheistic communities that shared the prophetic tradition recognized in Islam. This category is differentiated from that of the *mushrikūn*, unbelievers practising idolatry or polytheism. The contrast between these categories is evident in the tenth-century travel account of Ibn Faḍlān, who undertook a diplomatic voyage to the far north at the behest of the caliph of Baghdad, al-Muqtadir (r. 908-32). In 921, Ibn Faḍlān was sent to instruct the newly converted Muslim Bulgars in Islamic practices and beliefs, and possibly to offer protection from the Khazars, a rival tribe partly converted to Judaism. Travelling as far north as Volga Bulgaria (around modern-day Kazan, in south-west Russia), Ibn Faḍlān describes numerous

nomadic groups (including ‘a clan that worships snakes and another that worships fish and another that worships cranes’) and provides an eyewitness account of a ship burial among the Rus’ Vikings (Ibn Faḍlān, 2017: 18, 36). His account offers a valuable snapshot of the encounter of Islam, Judaism, shamanism, and Viking religion on the distant fringes of Europe. It was perhaps through such encounters between traders, invaders, and emissaries that legends and polemical ideas about Muslims and Jews reached Scandinavia (mostly Christianized by the twelfth century), leading to curiosities such as references in Old Norse sources to Jewish Host desecration as well as to the life of Muhammad (Hess and Adams, 2015: 8–9, 203, 264).

In contrast to how such ‘pagans’ were characterized by Muslims, Christians and Jews in Islamic lands were officially tolerated as *dhimmi*, non-Muslim minorities, whose basic rights to property and religious practice were protected by Islamic law in exchange for loyalty and payment of a minority tax (*jizya*). This doctrine found expression in the so-called Pact of Omar—an apocryphal treaty attributed by legend to the second caliph, ‘Umar (r. 634–44), that came to serve as a foundation for juridical precedent in the Middle Ages (Cohen, 1994: 54–5, 112). Islam’s policy of disinterested recognition of other religions ‘of the book’—upheld insofar as they submitted to Islamic rule and did not challenge Islam’s claim to political and spiritual superiority—provided a stable and largely non-threatening context in which some non-Muslim communities, especially Jews, came to flourish. Muslim writers, unlike many Christian authors, did not on the whole look at other religious traditions as necessary antagonists of Islam’s own historical drama or as witnesses of its received truth. As Mark Cohen explains, ‘relieved of this ambiguity . . . Islam was less inclined than Christendom to persecute the Jews and could more readily abide a vital Jewish presence in its midst’ (Cohen, 1994: 24).

One striking account from ninth-century al-Andalus (Muslim Iberia) sheds light on the different relationships that Jews, Christians, and Muslims could maintain with each other in the same region. Within the surviving correspondence of ninth-century Christian author Paulus Alvarus of Córdoba, there is a series of letters exchanged with Bodo, a Christian deacon from the Frankish court of Louis the Pious (Gil, 1973: 1:227–70). Around the year 838, Bodo fled to al-Andalus, where he converted to Judaism and took the name Eleazar (Riess, 2019: 52–5). Bodo/Eleazar then engaged in a written disputation with Paulus—himself allegedly the son of a convert from Judaism. In their correspondence, discussing conventional topics in Jewish–Christian polemics, Paulus repeats the standard characterization of the Jews as ‘blind’ to the meaning of their own Scriptures, and argues that the title of True Israel—God’s chosen people—now pertains to him and other Christians. As he says to Bodo/Eleazar, ‘all of your law—or better, my law—foretells Christ’ because ‘we are Israel . . . you know that [God’s promises] are all mine, not yours’ (Gil, 1973: 1:247–9).

Despite their brevity, the letters shed light on the place of Jews—including new converts—in Islamic and Christian societies. It is notable that Bodo/Eleazar relocated to Islamic territory before embracing his new Jewish faith. Such displacement was common for converts to Judaism in Christian Europe, and numerous cases of European converts to Judaism who relocated to the Muslim world are attested in the Cairo Geniza

(‘storeroom’), a hoard of documents gathered for over a millennium in the Ben Ezra synagogue in Old Cairo (Goitein, 1967–1993: 2:304). In Islamic al-Andalus, Bodo/Eleazar apparently found a safe place to claim his new identity, finding resistance only from the local Christian population for which conversion to Judaism represented a profound theological challenge.

This case sheds light on Christian–Muslim relations as well. Paulus Alvarus was part of the minority community of Mozarabic (Ar. *musta‘rab*, ‘Arabized’) Christians living in Islamic Córdoba. Approximately a decade after Paulus’s debate with Bodo/Eleazar, some four-dozen Christians in Córdoba were executed for blasphemy—deliberately insulting Muhammad in public—or apostasy from Islam (Wolf, 1988: 1). Paulus was one of two Mozarabic Christians—the other was his friend Eulogius, a priest in Córdoba executed in 859—to write an apology for the martyrs. Paulus’s *Indiculus luminosus* (*Luminous Guide*) defended the movement against critics and urged fellow Christians to refuse acculturation in Islamic civilization and reject Arabic mores: ‘Who, I ask, is found among the faithful laymen who is skilful enough to understand the book of Holy Scripture or anything written in Latin by our doctors? Who burns with love of the Gospel, the Prophets, the Apostles?’ (Gil, 1973: 1:314–15). The work also attacked the Prophet Muhammad directly, making it one of the earliest works of anti-Muslim polemic in the Christian West. The exchange of Bodo/Eleazar and Paulus underscores both the parameters of the *dhimmi* relationship in Islamic societies as well as the persistence of traditional theological ideas in defining Christian–Jewish relations.

Al-Andalus reached its point of greatest material splendour as a caliphate—combining religious and civil rule—between 929 and 1031. When the caliphate collapsed from civil strife, numerous small Islamic city-states emerged. Despite the resulting political chaos, this created more sources of cultural and intellectual patronage for Jews and Muslims alike, enabling Arabic literature and philosophy to flourish and catalysing the growth of Hebrew writing and thought. The success of Jewish poet Samuel ibn Nagrella (Ha-Nagid, d. c.1056) in the kingdom of Granada—where he rose to be no less than general of the Muslim kingdom’s army—further exemplifies the possibilities for cultural symbiosis and political cooperation in al-Andalus. Nevertheless, the security of Jewish life under Islamic rule was premised not on mutual appreciation or indifference to religious divergences but on the vertical relationship of Islamic sovereignty over minority subjugation. When that relationship was challenged, protections were easily revoked, as the ‘martyrs’ of Córdoba attest. Thus, after Ibn Nagrella’s death, his son Joseph, who took over his father’s ministerial role, drew the enmity of those in Granada who resented Jewish sovereignty over Muslims. The Granadan Muslim Abū Iṣḥāq al-Ilbirī attacked Joseph in a vitriolic poem, stating, ‘Do not consider the slaying of them [the Jews] to be a breach of faith . . . for they have already broken their pact with us’ (Monroe, 1974: 208–11). Abū Iṣḥāq’s words helped incite a mob to crucify Joseph and kill many Jews in the city. This swift turn of fortune exemplifies the sometimes precarious nature of Muslim protection in the Middle Ages and provides a sobering example of the conflicting realities that defined inter-confessional relations in Iberia (Ashtor, 1973–1984: 1:170).

WAS SPAIN DIFFERENT?

Iberia's multi-confessional landscape stands out in European history both in terms of its complexity and in its long evolution. This uniqueness comes into focus in comparison with other regions of European lands with significant Muslim populations such as Sicily and Hungary. Sicily was under Muslim control between the early tenth and the end of the eleventh century, and was subsequently ruled by Norman leaders who settled in southern Italy, beginning with Roger I (d. 1101). This rule continued through the reign of Roger's great-grandson, Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen (d. 1250). Despite Frederick's interest in Arabic science and philosophy, he forcibly relocated Sicily's Muslims to the mainland Italian town of Lucera in the 1220s (Metcalf, 2009: 91, 141). Equally fruitful to compare to Iberia are the Muslim settlements in Hungary, which are evident from the early eleventh century (Berend, 2001: 66–7). In the late eleventh century, King Ladislaus I (László, r. 1077–95) and his successor Coloman the Learned (Kálmán, r. 1095–1116, d. 1116) implemented restrictive legislation (forbidding the avoiding of pork, forced relocation, and so on) intended to prohibit Islamic practices and Christianize Muslims in the realm. A Muslim traveller from Granada, Abū Ḥāmid al-Gharnāṭī (d. 1170), visited Hungary in the twelfth century and noted the sizeable Muslim communities. He further noted that Muslim soldiers served King Géza II of Hungary (r. 1141–62) in war against Byzantium, a fact also found in Byzantine sources (Berend, 2001: 141). Nevertheless, he also commented on the existence of crypto-Muslims who were obliged to feign Christian practice in public (Berend, 2001: 240). There is little evidence for Muslim presence in the region after the middle of the thirteenth century, apart from a few passing references to 'Saracens' serving in the royal bureaucracy between 1353 and 1404 (Štulrajterová, 2013: 198). This lack suggests that the aggressive policies of Coloman and his successors—which were directed at Jews and Muslims together—eventually succeeded in Christianizing the population, at least on the level of appearances.

By contrast, the Iberian Peninsula hosted significant Muslim polities between the eighth and fifteenth centuries in which sizeable and sophisticated Jewish populations flourished. Both Muslims and Jews came to play roles in Christian society in later centuries as well. This long history of inter-religious relations has constituted the basis of intense debate among historians. The Spanish scholar Américo Castro proposed in 1948 that the extensive degree of multi-confessional interaction—which he denoted as 'living-together-ness' (*convivencia*)—was definitive in the formation of a unique Spanish culture and history (Nirenberg, 1996: 8). While many have criticized this concept as suggesting an anachronistic notion of religious harmony, others have proposed alternative models that recognize Iberia's unique multi-confessional landscape but see it as defined in part by ritualized competition and violence (Nirenberg, 1996: 9) or guided by political and economic

expediency (Catlos, 2014: 520–2). No matter the model, however, historians recognize that Iberian Jews, Christians, and Muslims came into regular contact over the course of nearly a millennium. While similar cultural configurations existed throughout the Middle East, the religious landscape of the Iberian Peninsula was unique in medieval European history.

CRUSADE AND RECONQUEST

The Christian conquest of Toledo in Iberia (1085) catalysed the rapid consolidation of most of Iberia's Muslim city-states within the expanding Almoravid dynasty and was followed a decade later with the launching in northern Europe of the First Crusade (1095–9) to capture the Holy Land (1095). The shifting frontiers during these military conflicts with Islam yielded in the Christian popular imagination a spiritual mythology of crusade and 'reconquest'. The Christian mercenary soldier Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar ('El Cid', d. 1099), who in reality fought for both Muslim and Christian armies in turn, was later idealized—most famously in Spain's literary epic poem 'El Cantar del Mio Cid' (The Song of My Cid/Lord)—as a perfect Christian knight fighting for the cause of territorial expansion. Similarly, legends about the military victory of Charles Martel against the Muslims at the Battle of Tours in 732, and about the campaigns against Muslims by Charlemagne (Charles's grandson) in northern Iberia in the late eighth century, lived on in medieval French literature. Islam was regularly depicted in *Chansons de gestes* (epic poems, such as the 'Song of Roland'), prose romance, and liturgical drama in France and England as a form of idolatry, and Muslims were cast as pagans who worshipped the Prophet Muhammad (Tolan, 2002: 126–7).

A different historical myth developed among Jewish thinkers of the period. In contrast to the Christians in Muslim territories, many Jews continued to flourish under the Almoravids (Fierro, 1997: 523–4), and those that did relocate still often memorialized life under Islamic rule. The poet Moses Ibn Ezra (d. after 1138), born in Granada but displaced by the Almoravids to Toledo, lamented his fate of ending his days among the Christians. 'How long will my feet be sent wandering in exile (*galut*)? . . . my paths would be blessed if God were to bring me back to Granada . . . a land in which my life was pleasant' (Brann, 1991: 44–5). His longing went unfulfilled, as the Almoravids were soon conquered by the rival Berber faction of the Almohads, causing more Jews to flee north to the Christian kingdoms. Numerous others, including the great rabbinical scholar Maimonides (d. 1204), sought refuge elsewhere in the Muslim world, including North Africa and Fatimid Egypt. As one historian summarizes the shift, 'During its first four centuries, al-Andalus had been a land of three religions; after this century, the only remaining indigenous non-Muslims would be a minority of Jews' (Viguera-Molins, 2010: 33).

THE TWELFTH-CENTURY TURN

A notable demographic expansion in the twelfth century supported the rapid growth of Europe's urban population. In most regions of Latin Europe, populations increased significantly between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, peaking in most areas around the dawn of the fourteenth (Fossier, 2004: 14). This led to more direct interaction between Christians and Jews, while the First Crusade established European settlements in the Holy Land, putting Latin thinkers in more direct contact with Byzantine and Islamic civilizations (Kedar, 1984: 86-9). The conquest of Toledo produced a similar effect in Iberia, leading to the translation from Arabic into Latin—an activity that involved Jews directly—of numerous texts of Greek science and philosophy that had been lost in the Latin world.

One figure who provided a bridge between these different worlds was Petrus Alfonsi, a Jew from northern Iberia, educated in Arabic letters, who converted to Christianity in 1106 and spent his career in France and in England. He translated Islamic aphorisms and didactic fables into Latin under the title *Disciplina Clericalis* (Instruction of Students/Clerics), and then wrote the *Dialogus contra Iudaeos* (Dialogue against the Jews), an extended polemic against Judaism that also included a chapter against Islam. Both works were immensely popular and introduced knowledge of Islamic and Jewish texts into Latin Europe for the first time (Tolan, 1993: 108-10). This knowledge expanded when translators of Greek science and Arabic philosophy working in Iberia—the Englishman Robert of Ketton and the Istrian Herman of Carinthia, among others—also translated the entire Qur'an and related material about Islam into Latin (Burman, 2007:15, 106). They worked at the behest of French Abbot Peter the Venerable of Cluny (d. 1156), who used this material, together with Alfonsi's polemic, to produce elaborate treatises attacking both Judaism and Islam (Iogna-Prat, 2002: 302, 339). These marked a new stage in Christian polemical writing by including references not only to biblical passages but also to non-Christian authorities such as the Talmud and the Qur'an (Cohen, 1999: 259-60).

Even before knowledge of non-Christian texts became more widespread among Christian thinkers, the rapid growth of the first universities in the twelfth century supported the emergence of new scholarly communities that began to engage more extensively with the Hebrew Bible and to seek philosophical methods for establishing truth apart from Scripture through logic and dialectic. In the late eleventh century, Gilbert of Crispin, Abbot of Westminster, wrote a pair of polemical dialogues that show a movement towards the discussion of Christian arguments on seemingly rational terms. His *Disputatio Iudei et Christiani* (Dispute of the Jew and the Christian, c.1092) sets out scriptural authorities for Christian truth, and the *Disputatio Christiani cum Gentili* (Dispute of the Christian with the Gentile, c.1093) attempts to establish Christian truth on the basis of rational argument (*ratio*) (Abulafia, 1995: 73). This methodology provided a foundation for numerous works of debate and disputation in the twelfth century (Funkenstein, 1971: 377).

Only a few years later, a canon at the cathedral school of Notre-Dame in Paris, William of Champeaux, set up a retreat outside the city walls that would eventually become the abbey of St Victor. The canons who worked there dedicated themselves to biblical exegesis, including a new attention to the Hebrew Bible itself. William's student Peter Abelard (1079–1142) followed the rationalist model for Christian thought begun by Gilbert. His *Collationes* (Conversations), better known as the *Dialogus inter philosophum, iudaeum, et christianum* (Dialogue of a Philosopher with a Jew and a Christian, 1136) sought to evaluate core tenets of Christian belief in a comparative context on the basis of reason and logic (Abelard, 2001: lv). Other Victorine scholars, such as Hugh of St Victor (d. 1141) and his student Andrew (d. 1175) engaged with Judaism through reforms in exegetical practice, the latter pursuing a rudimentary study of Hebrew itself through consultation with local Jewish scholars (Smalley, 1983: 155). The greater Christian engagement with Hebrew sources and Jewish scholars also led to polemical encounters, such as the debate between German Benedictine Rupert of Deutz and the Jew Judah—the latter eventually converted to Christianity and, under the name of Herman, engaged his former coreligionists in debate (Abulafia, 1995: 118). His dramatization of events in his conversion narrative states that Rupert defended Christian belief 'both by reason and by authority of Scripture' (Morrison, 1992: 81). Herman-Judah's text exemplifies the broader twelfth-century expansion of traditional proofs of Christian truth to include not only philosophical reason but also the personal testimony of converts.

Jews became the object of Christian anxieties on the level of popular piety as well as in the realm of learned theology. The most palpable reflection of the former is the sudden appearance of the Blood Libel, in which Jews were accused of abducting and murdering Christians. The first ritual murder accusation appeared in England in 1150 when Thomas of Monmouth wrote of the death—allegedly at the hands of Jews—of young William of Norwich six years before. Such accusations recurred across England and the continent for centuries thereafter, persisting even into the present day (Rose, 2015: 9). By the late thirteenth century, theological discussions of the doctrine of Transubstantiation gave way to new accusations that Jews stole Hosts from sanctuaries in order to desecrate them. After the first accusation in Paris in 1290 dozens of subsequent charges appeared all across Europe both in stories and in church iconography (Rubin, 1999: 109–14).

The increased Christian attention to Judaism provoked a robust tradition of Jewish anti-Christian writing in response. For the first time, Jewish thinkers engaged extensively with Christian theology in philosophical terms and provided critiques of Christian claims and beliefs. The Iberian poet and philosopher Judah Halevi (d. 1141) composed, just a few years after Peter Abelard's *Conversations*, a fictional dialogue between a Jew, a Christian, a Muslim and a pagan king, entitled the *Kuzari*. Based on the legend of the conversion of the Asian Khazars to Judaism (the same converts referred to by Ibn Faḍlān as rivals of the Bulgars), Halevi's text imagines a pagan Khazar king comparing the relative merits of each religion and eventually choosing to convert to Judaism. The work draws from Aristotelian philosophy to provide a critique

of Islam and Christianity and an apology for Judaism as the most rational religion (Sirat, 1985: 115). At the same time, Jacob ben Reuben (fl. second half of the twelfth century), who was among those Jews who relocated upon the rise of the Almohads, wrote an extensive polemic in Hebrew against Christianity entitled *Sefer milḥamot Adonai* (Book of the Wars of the Lord). The work, which takes the form of a dialogue between a Christian and Jew, includes a significant portion of the Gospel of Matthew translated into Hebrew and strongly critiques Christian beliefs in the Incarnation. Jacob's polemic inspired numerous subsequent works such as, perhaps indirectly, the *Sefer Nizzahon Vetus* (Old Book of Victory) from thirteenth-century Ashkenaz, which showed familiarity with all the Gospels (Berger, 1979: 30), and the work of fourteenth-century writer Shem Tov ibn Shaprut, which provided the first full Hebrew translation of Matthew (Lasker, 2007: 15). Around 1400 in Prague, in the wake of a massacre of seventy-seven Jews prompted by accusations of a convert named Peter, talmudist Yom-Tov Lipman Mühlhausen (fl. early fifteenth century) wrote the *Sefer Nizzahon* (Book of Victory; not to be confused with the earlier work with this title). He combines anti-Christian and anti-Qaraite arguments with an interest in rationalist Jewish philosophy adopted from Maimonides and others, showing that he was aware of the intellectual currents of Jews in Spain and France (Žonca, 2018: 136–8).

The large-scale shift in patterns of Jewish settlement had a notable influence in Jewish religious life as well. The small Jewish communities in France and Germany began to grow in the eleventh century, despite incidents of persecution and uneven royal policies. Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes ('Rashi', d. 1105) was an active biblical commentator in France who studied under some of the leading rabbis of Worms and Mainz and eventually founded his own yeshiva in Troyes. His exegetical commentaries on the Hebrew Bible often stressed the *peshat* (literal or historical meaning), and his readings—in some cases responses to Christian interpretation—were widely influential on the study of the Torah. A number of Rashi's grandsons, notably Samuel ben Meir (d. c.1158), were also preeminent rabbinical authorities and their influential 'Tosafot' (additions), which included comments on Jewish relations with Christians, came to be included in all printed copies of the Talmud (Kanarfogel, 2015: 158). Rashi's works were also read by many medieval Christian thinkers ranging from the twelfth-century Victorines to the fourteenth-century Franciscan exegete Nicholas of Lyra (d. 1349), who quotes him extensively in his own voluminous commentaries. Because Lyra's *Postillae* (Postils or Additions), together with the later additions by fifteenth-century convert and bishop Solomon Halevi/Paul of Burgos (d. 1434), were often printed with the biblical text, Rashi's readings continued to be read by Christians well into the seventeenth century (Klepper, 2008: 59, 109–10).

At the same time, Jews in the Rhineland developed a flourishing religious life. In the late twelfth century, a new pietist movement emerged among German Jews (Ashkenazi Hasidim) settled along the Rhine between Speyer and Mainz, stressing dutiful adherence to Jewish legal customs as well as mystical reflection, intense prayer, and asceticism. Its ideals were most fully expressed by Judah ben Samuel ('the Pious', d. 1217), author of *Sefer Hasidim* (Book of the Pious), the most important work of Jewish devotional

literature from the period. It stresses the importance of fulfilling God's will through observance and reflective devotion and enjoins the pious to minimize contact with non-pious Jews as well as gentiles (Marcus, 1981: 88, 93).

A PERSECUTING SOCIETY

The years between 1215 and 1315 constituted a formative period for new policies and norms governing Christian interaction with other religious communities. This structuring is evident in the compendium of canon law, the *Decretals*, made in 1230 by Friar Raymond of Peñafort (d. 1275), which contains a specific section of laws pertaining to Jews and Saracens (Muldoon, 1979: 4; Freidenreich, 2011: 45–6). A decade and a half before this, Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) convened the Fourth Lateran Council (Lateran IV) in 1215. Considered now one of the most significant ecclesiastical councils of the medieval Church, it responded to the spread of the heresy in southern France, and addressed theological questions relating to Transubstantiation as well as pressing issues of ecclesiastical practice and discipline. It also mandated that all Jews and Muslims be required to wear distinctive dress in order to prevent inadvertent sexual relations among the members of different religious communities, a decree that eventually led in some places to the practice of assigning a 'badge' (*signum*) to mark off minorities (Resnick, 2012: 80).

Lateran IV's attempt to systematize the categories of social differences prompted R. I. Moore to posit the council as a key moment in the 'formation of a persecuting society' in the later Middle Ages. In his words, 'Lateran IV laid down a machinery of persecution of Western Christendom ... which was to prove adaptable to a much wider variety of victims than the heretics for whom it was designed' (Moore, 2007: 10). Lateran IV also limited the formation of new religious orders, leading to the growth of existing Mendicant orders including the Franciscans and Dominicans. Both groups dedicated themselves to preaching and study, producing missionaries and scholars that propagated a new, more systematic vision of Christian orthodoxy. Lateran IV also mandated the organization of 'inquests' (*inquisitiones*) into heretical belief and behaviour, and subsequent preaching campaigns against the Albigensian Cathars in the Languedoc led, by the 1230s, to the papal appointment of mendicants as leaders in this new inquisitorial activity (Cohen, 1982: 45).

The mendicant interest in preaching to non-Christians also led to more intense critical reading of non-Christian sources (Chazan, 1989: 30). As part of such efforts, Friar Raymond of Peñafort helped organize a debate in Barcelona in 1263 between Friar Paul Christiani (a convert) and the leader of the Catalan Jewish community, Nahmanides (d. 1270). It centred on the Christian claim that post-biblical literature in the rabbinical tradition, above all the Talmud, proved that the Messiah had already come. Unlike earlier assaults on rabbinical tradition such as those made by Nicholas Donin in Paris in the 1240s, which led to the widespread burning of the Talmud in the city (Dahan,

1999: 42), the arguments made in Barcelona claimed that the Talmud was a proof of Christian truth.

The immediate effects of the Disputation of Barcelona were visible both in papal rhetoric as well as in subsequent polemical writing by friars. In 1267, Pope Clement IV (1265–8) issued a bull ('*Turbato corde*') urging friars to serve as inquisitors to investigate not only heretical Christians but also Jews who might have encouraged conversion to Judaism or helped converts return to the Jewish fold (Grayzel, 1989: 103). Clement's words give voice to an expanded vision of the scope of Christian jurisdiction to encompass not only heresy but also infidelity, and thus represented an erosion of the rights transmitted in the *Sicut Iudaeis non* bull (Grayzel, 1989: 13–15). This rationale for the regulation of non-Christian belief was developed even more by Friar Ramon Martí (d. after 1287), who participated actively in Dominican efforts to learn Arabic and Hebrew (Vose, 2009: 105, 113). In addition to anti-Muslim polemics, Martí wrote two anti-Jewish works attacking rabbinical literature, including the *Pugio fidei* (Dagger of Faith), which provided extensive citations of texts in their original languages and alphabets (Szpiech, 2013a: 129–34). Martí elaborated the scholastic arguments of his Dominican confrère, Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), on whose *Summa contra gentiles* (Summa against the Gentiles) he relied heavily, and combined them with the linguistic, extra-biblical focus introduced at the Disputation of Barcelona.

The Christian attention to post-biblical Jewish thought in the late thirteenth century was matched by a parallel interest in Islamic sources. Florentine Dominican Riccoldo da Montecroce (d. 1320), who spent most of the 1290s in Baghdad, attacked Islam in his *Contra legem Sarracenorum* (Against the Law of the Saracens), maligning Muhammad as a pseudo-prophet, liar, and sexual deviant. His work would go on to become a popular Latin Christian polemic against Islam in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and, following its translation into German by Martin Luther, continued to be influential for centuries more (Tolan, 2002: 254; George-Tvrtković, 2012: 89–90). Almost exactly contemporaneous with Riccoldo was the career of the polymath Ramon Llull, born on the island of Mallorca around 1232. Llull dedicated his life to dialogue and disputation with Muslims, developing an elaborate system of philosophical logic by which he intended to prove the rational superiority of the Christian faith to Muslim interlocutors and readers. His best-known work is the *Llibre del gentil i dels tres savis* (Book of the Gentile and the Three Wise Men), a literary dialogue between a Muslim, a Christian, and a Jew, resembling dialogues of Abelard and Halevi (Daniel, 1993: 65; Tolan 2002: 263–7). Llull encouraged fellow Christians to study Arabic, and at the ecumenical Council of Vienne (1311–12), he won support for a proposal to establish chairs for teaching Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic at various European universities (Cohen, 1982: 201); these plans, however, did not seem to have many tangible results (Vose, 2009: 32, 110).

The military successes of the Christians in Castile and Aragon led to the rapid expansion of Christian territory in the thirteenth century, culminating in the conquest of Almohad Seville in 1248. This catalysed the formation of the small Nasrid kingdom around Granada, which would survive—as a tributary state under Castile and the only remaining Muslim polity in Europe—until 1492. The vast areas of Castile that were conquered had to be

parcelled out and repopulated, a process that involved many Jews who were invited to settle and in some cases granted land holdings by the crown (Ray, 2006: 17–21). Like the Jews, the Muslim population that remained in Christian territories, who in modern scholarship have been referred to as ‘Mudejar’ Muslims, were regarded as part of ‘the royal treasure’ under the king’s protection. As such, they enjoyed basic legal protections including a circumscribed freedom of religion. Rules governing Jewish and Mudejar life and religious practice in Christian territories are given in the vernacular law code *Siete partidas* (Seven Parts) of King Alfonso X (r. 1252–84), which mandated minorities ‘keeping their own law and not insulting ours’ (Powell, 1990: 42). The laws stipulated by Alfonso support the protection of converts from Islam and, following Lateran IV, stress the importance of avoiding sexual relations between Christians and non-Christians (Catlos, 2014: 363).

Sexuality was a perpetual challenge in part because it was not uncommon for Christians, Muslims, and Jews to have children with their domestic slaves, who were usually (although not always) of a different religion. The circulation of captives sold for domestic service was a persistent feature of life around the Mediterranean (Hershenzon, 2018: 19, 45). The first Christian orders dedicated to the redemption of captives in Muslim lands, the Mercedarians and the Trinitarians, were founded in the thirteenth century and various polemical works in Arabic and Aljamiado (Romance written in Arabic letters), including some allegedly written by Muslim captives in France and elsewhere, survive from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Colominas Aparicio, 2018: 21). It was in this context that writers like Alfonso Buenhombre, discussed in the introduction to this chapter, could add authority to their own anti-Jewish texts by claiming they were long-lost Arabic books discovered while in captivity in a Muslim land.

CONQUESTS, CONVERSIONS, AND EXPULSIONS

Numerous events over the course of the fifteenth century affected the relations between Jews, Christians, and Muslims all around the Mediterranean. The expansion of the Ottoman Empire, which would become the main political and military rival to Habsburg Spain in subsequent centuries, marked the growth of Muslim communities in the Balkans in the middle of the century and Muslim conquest of Constantinople in 1453. In Iberia, Jewish–Christian relations were permanently altered by the anti-Jewish riots that swept across the peninsula in 1391, leading to the murder of tens of thousands of Jews and the forcible conversion of tens of thousands more (Baer, 1961: 2:96). From the aftermath of these riots, a new class of converted Jews (*conversos*) emerged, precipitating a deep social and religious crisis in Iberian society that lasted throughout the fifteenth century and beyond. Many *conversos*, forced to adopt Christianity in public, maintained some Jewish traditions and beliefs in their private life. As *conversos* were, unlike Jews,

entitled to the same economic and social opportunities as other Christians, a culture of suspicion began to emerge in which *converso* religiosity was scrutinized.

The problem of how to recognize religious affiliation and how to understand the role of volition in the efficacy of baptism became acute over the course of the century, giving rise to a new vocabulary of genealogy to discuss 'Jewish blood' and to distinguish between 'New Christians' and 'Old' (Nirenberg, 2013: 239). The uncertainty over such questions and the proliferation of new religious practices were decisive factors in the formation of the Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition by the Spanish monarchs in 1478. Although much of its work was undertaken by Dominican friars, the Spanish Inquisition operated under control of the monarchs, and would persist as a bureaucratic institution of the state until 1834 (Peters, 1989: 104). While the initial focus of the Inquisition was the religious habits of *conversos*, its scope widened in the sixteenth century to include forcibly converted Muslims (*Moriscos*), Protestants, and other 'heterodox' groups (Peters, 1989: 101).

The expulsion of the Jews from the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon in 1492, which took place only a few months after the Christian conquest of Muslim Granada, led to the displacement of perhaps 75,000 people, although accurate figures are lacking (Assis and Meyerson, 2018: 181). These events drove many Jews and Muslims towards North Africa and the Ottoman Empire, which had expanded in the Balkans in the middle of the fifteenth century and conquered Constantinople in 1453. Although the Jews had suffered many expulsions throughout Europe—including from England (1290), France (1182, 1306, 1394), Hungary (1349 and 1360), Austria (1420-1), select towns in Germany (1012, 1442, 1478, 1499, and so on), and elsewhere—the expulsion from Castile and Aragon, Portugal (1497), and Navarra (1498), affected the largest number of people and produced economic, religious, and cultural effects that lasted for centuries. The expulsion of 1492, together with the expulsion of the *Moriscos* from Spain in the early seventeenth century, marked the last moments of centuries of large-scale interaction between Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula, opening a new chapter in inter-confessional relations in early modern Europe.

CONCLUSION

The history of interaction between Jews, Christians, and Muslims in medieval Europe is not uniform, but instead unfolds in different ways in different regions. Christian-Muslim and Jewish-Muslim interaction was confined to those few places where Muslims lived—Iberia and southern Italy—while Jewish-Christian interaction occurred in a number of communities both in the north and south. Such activity was naturally concentrated where the Jewish population was largest—the upper and middle Rhine Valley, Bohemia, southern France, and the Iberian Peninsula—but also occurred in areas that Jews visited for business. Although most engagement with rival religious traditions took place in writing and iconography rather than through face-to-face encounters, the nature of the

religious imagination cannot be separated from the history of the social interaction of real people. Christian ideas about other religions were not primarily formed in response to the presence of real Jews and Muslims in Christian society, but instead grew out of theological categories and concepts. But, once established, these ideas helped determine the parameters of Christian interaction with those groups by affecting legal norms and social practices. In a similar way, Muslim ideas about the role of Judaism and Christianity in prophetic history affected the policies that guided legal and social dealings between Muslims and non-Muslims. Finally, although Jews mostly viewed Islam and Christianity through the lens of their own religious history and their own experience of religious autonomy, they still adopted and influenced many customs of the majority cultures in which they lived, modifying their religious understanding through the process. Taken in the broadest terms, the history of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in medieval Europe involved both the lived encounter between neighbouring communities and, more often, the imagined competition between their rival faiths.

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