

***De Syon exierit lex et verbum Domini de Iherusalem':  
An Exegetical Discourse (c. 400-c. 1200) that  
Informed Crusaders' Views of Jews***

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*This paper assesses how medieval Christian writers transformed encounters with Middle Eastern peoples such as the Jews into a complex theological discourse via the medium used by Pope Urban II in 1095 to launch the First Crusade, the Latin sermon. It argues that a hitherto unnoted homiletic tradition about Jews originated in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages based (1) on exegetical polemics that stretched back centuries in Christian theology, and (2) on a discernible chronicle and sermon tradition that depicted Jews in varying degrees of apologia based on a prophesied role as “witnesses” to the eschatological expectations of Christian revelation. Further, it will present new sermon evidence that reveals the rise of a virulent type of rhetoric that both characterized Jews as responsible for a host of ills that ranged from irreligiosity to blood libel, and recast the Hebrews into what Richard of St. Victor called a “discredited” people that should be numbered among other Church enemies (pagans, Muslims, and heretics). The paper concludes that sermon writers’ depictions of peoples in Levantine Crusader territories were governed by the same kind of biblical typologies and exclusionary rhetoric that informed contemporaneous sermon presentations of Muslims, Jerusalem, loca sancta, and northern European and Scandinavian lands<sup>1</sup>.*

Let us suppose that Christ neither died nor was buried, nor lived at any point in Jerusalem, surely even if all this had never occurred, one fact alone ought to have aroused you to go to the aid of that land and city – the fact that “The law shall go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem!”

Pope Urban II’s Sermon at Clermont, 27 November 1095  
(as reported by Guibert of Nogent, *Gesta dei per Francos*)<sup>2</sup>

1 A preliminary version of this article was presented at the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association (Denver, CO: 12-14 June 2014); I appreciate the comments and questions both from audience members and subsequent anonymous readers.

2 Guibert of Nogent, *Gesta dei per Francos*, RHC. Occ. IV: 138, F-G. [“Ponamus modo in Iherusalem Christum neque mortuum, nec sepultum, nec ibidem aliquando vixisse. Certe, si haec deessent omnia, solum illud ad subveniendum terrae et civitate vos excitare debuerat quia de Syon exierit lex et verbum Domini de Iherusalem.”]

## Introduction

All chronicle accounts of Pope Urban II's sermon at Clermont defined the "enemies of Christ" in relation to the usurpation of Jerusalem and the Holy Sites from Christian ownership. While those opponents were initially understood to be Muslims, Jews on the Continent were considered by many western Christians to be as much (if not more) of a collective enemy of the Crusading "soldiers of Christ" (*milites Christi*) as the Saracens, with the result that pogroms occurred in the Rhineland during the first wave of crusaders to the east.<sup>3</sup> This article examines the question of whether sermon writers' depictions of local peoples in Crusader territories of the Levant—in this case, the Jews—were governed by the same kind of exclusionary rhetoric that have been shown elsewhere to inform presentations of physical spaces (Jerusalem, the Holy Sites, and northern European and Scandinavian lands).<sup>4</sup>

This research uses Latin sermons to assess the a hitherto unnoted (or discounted) monastic discourse about an indigenous people of the Holy Land, the Jews, that deeply influenced medieval European perceptions about the world beyond Western Christendom.<sup>5</sup> Fur-

3 Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Christian Violence and the Crusades," in Aublafia, ed., *Religious Violence*, 3-20; Robert Chazan, *European Jewry & First Crusade*, 50-136, and "From the First Crusade to the Second: Evolving Perceptions of the Christian-Jewish Conflict," in Singer and Van Engen, eds., *Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century Europe*, 46-62; Jeremy Cohen, "The Hebrew Crusade Chronicles in Their Christian Cultural Context," in Haverkamp, *Juden und Christen zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge*, 17-34; Eidelberg, *Jews and Crusaders: The Hebrew Chronicles*, 21-115; H. Liebeschütz, "The Crusading Movement in its Bearing on the Christian Attitude towards Jewry," in *Journal of Jewish Studies* 10 (1980), 97-111.

4 For Jerusalem and Holy Sites, see Upton, *Sacred Topography*. For northern European and Scandinavian lands, see Upton, "Holy Places & Imagined Hellscapes," in *Quidditas* 34 (2013), 29-74. For sermon depictions of Arabs and Muslims—the other indigenous peoples besides the Jews that the Crusaders found in the Levant—see Upton, "Hostis Antiquus," in *Quidditas* 32 (2011), 30-71.

5 For an introduction to medieval sermon studies, and methodology followed here for identifying *topoi* within array of sermon evidence and contextualizing historically, see Beverly M. Kienzle and David D'Avray, "Sermons," in Mantello and Rigg, *Medieval Latin*, 659-69; and David D'Avray, "Method in the Study of Medieval Sermons," in Beriou and D'Avray, *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermons*, 1-27. For monastic use of Biblical *topoi* in sermons, see Isabelle Cochelin, "When Monks Were the Book: The Bible and Monasticism (6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Centuries) and Eyal Poleg, "'A Ladder Set Up on Earth': The Bible in Medieval Sermons," in Boynton and Reilly, *Practice of Bible*, 61-83 and 205-227. For definition of how "discourse" should be understood here, see Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 6-19: esp. p. 7: "...by a discourse we mean a system of classification that establishes hierarchies, delimits one category from another, and exercises power through that system of classification...."

ther, it shows that the western Christian homiletic tradition cleaved to Biblical typologies and prefiguring when describing the Jewish people so that by the time of Pope Urban II's call for the First Crusade in 1095, views about Jews originated in a late antique and early medieval discourse based (1) on exegetical polemics about the Hebrews that stretched back centuries in Christian theology, and (2) on a discernible chronicle and sermon tradition lasted well into the twelfth century and depicted Jews in varying degrees of apologia based on a prophesied role as "witnesses" to the eschatological expectations of Christian revelation.

Next, using new evidence from twelfth century sermons, it will be argued that despite some incidental respect accorded to the Jews by Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153) and Peter of Celle (d. 1183)—in sermons that highlighted Hebrew "ancient purity rites" and obligations to the Jews because of the Christian inheritance of certain Jewish traditions—substantial transformations occurred in homilies about the Jews that negatively affected western Christian perceptions. Indeed, Guibert of Nogent (d. 1124) wrote sermons that vilified the Jews on the basis of both their "blindness" regarding the Scriptures and a disbelief in the Virgin Mary, and Honorius Augustodunensis (d. 1154), Arnold of Bonavalle (d. 1156), and Eckbert of Schönau (d. 1184) collectively went from espousing the Church's general tolerance of Jews to making demands that Jews ought to be condemned like heretics and pagans, a tendency that finds its ultimate expression in Richard of St. Victor's "Balak and Balaam" cycle of sermons which reveals the rise of a more virulent type of rhetoric that characterized Jews as enemies of humanity and the Church, responsible for a host of ills that ranged from irreligiosity to blood libel.

The sermon evidence for biblical typologies that I've examined elsewhere (depictions of Jerusalem, the *Loca Sancta*, and Muslims) finds a counterpart, therefore, in this article's assessment of Jews.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> My thanks again to the late Michael T. Walton for his editorial suggestion that I revise my dissertation in anticipation of publishing two separate monographs, with topics split between physical places (Jerusalem and *loca sancta*), and peoples of the Crusader-era Levant (Muslims and Jews). For references to outliers of Jerusalem and the Holy Sites not found in this article, please see Upton, *Sacred Topography*.]

By the time Pope Urban II called for his armed pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1095, there still remained in Christian descriptions of Jews a reliance on stereotypical presentations (Jews as “witnesses”) that reflected a monastic dependency on the Bible, rather than any sense of contemporary experiences that could have readily been garnered from European encounters with Jewish communities throughout the Continent, Iberia, or Sicily. In this fact, then, western perceptions of Levantine peoples such as the Jews were just as dependent on the Bible as had been their beliefs about other aspects of the Holy Land such as Jerusalem, the Holy Sites, and Muslims.

### **The Ignored Tribes – A Prefatory Context Perceptions of Jews in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages**

For all the virulent remarks that Guibert of Nogent made against Jews in his other works, this paper’s opening citation from his First Crusade chronicle—*The Deeds of God through the Franks*—reveals a common belief at the beginning of the twelfth century that Jews served as “necessary witnesses” for Christian revelation at the end of time.<sup>7</sup> Textually, Jews appeared neither in the *Gesta Francorum*’s nor Robert of Rheims’s version of Urban II’s sermon, but were the crux of the message rendered in the chronicles of Baldric of Dol and Guibert of Nogent. For Baldric, the conquest of the earthly Jerusalem posed a threat to the celestial one because the Jews needed to be present as witnesses to Christian revelation at the end of time.<sup>8</sup> For Guibert, the scripturally salvific importance of Jerusalem was so connected to the Jews and Old Testament history that the Holy Land’s succor by the Franks would be necessary even if Christ had not spent any time or died there.<sup>9</sup> Both of these views were repeated with various modifications throughout the period, and the chroniclers were drawing on very traditional views of the Jews that stretched back to the early days of the Church.

Christian theology in late antiquity and the early medieval peri-

7 For general introductions to Jews in the medieval period, see the following: Chazan, *European Jewry & First Crusade*, 1987; Cluse, *Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages*; Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 1999; and Stow, *Alienated Minority*, 1992.

8 Baldric of Dol, *De peregrinatione Jerosolimitana*, RHC Occ. IV: 12-16.

9 Guibert of Nogent, *Gesta dei per Francos*, RHC. Occ. IV: 138.

od engaged Jews by consistently using the Bible as a template from which to interpret their collective presence in the world.<sup>10</sup> From the time of the apostle Paul (d. 65) through Augustine in the fifth century, Christians had considered the place of Jews within the Christian religion mostly in eschatological terms. In expectation of the Second Coming (*parousia*), Christians deemed Jews necessary “witnesses” for the divine revelation of the Christian religion made manifest in Christ’s return to earth. From the Christian point of view, the Jews were a people who had recognized God’s presence in human experience, and, therefore, from the time of Abraham had been “chosen” by Him with a covenant (*berit*) and series of laws (the Torah and *mitzvot*) that had to be observed as a community with great historical purpose. A series of prophets (Moses, Ezekiel) repeatedly reminded this community of its obligations. Besides the written word of God recorded in the Torah, an oral tradition (Talmud) had grown alongside the religion that helped the Jews respect and understand their biblical past.

Christianity arose within and departed from this Judaic tradition in that Jesus of Nazareth focused on the injunctions and history of the Torah, and his apostles (and the gospel authors) placed particular emphasis on a complex Trinitarian understanding of the Word, or *Logos*, with Christ himself representative both of a fulfillment of messianic expectation held by some within the Jewish tradition and also as a New Covenant between God and humanity that (as articulated by Paul) incorporated and transcended Mosaic laws.<sup>11</sup>

Late antiquity was a period of increasing crystallization in the

10 Bachrach, *Early Medieval Jewish Policy*, 35-39; Jeremy Cohen, “‘Slay them Not’: Augustine and the Jews and Modern Scholarship,” *Medieval Encounters* 4 (1998), 78-92, and *Living Letters*, 19-94; Irven M. Resnick, “The Falsification of Scripture and Medieval and Christian and Jewish Polemics,” in *Medieval Encounters* 2 (1996), 344-380; Moore, *Persecuting Society*, 26-41; Simonsohn, *Apostolic See*, 39-94.

11 For overview of rabbinical thought on the Messiah, see Lawrence H. Schiffman, “Messianism and Apocalypticism in Rabbinic Texts,” in Katz, *Cambridge History of Judaism*, IV: 1053-1072; for essentials of theological split between Christians and Jews, see relevant chapters in Daniélou, *Theology of Jewish Christianity*; Dunn, *Paul and Mosaic Law*; Inglebert, *Interpretatio Christiana*. For aspects of Christian perceptions of Jewish messianism during Crusading period, see Maya Soifer, “‘You say that the Messiah has come ...’: the Ceuta disputation (1179) and its place in the Christian anti-Jewish polemics of the High Middle Ages,” in *Journal of Medieval History* 31:3 (2005), 287-307; for Jewish perceptions of Christianity and the Messiah, see Daniel J. Lasker, “Rashi and Maimonides on Christianity,” in Kanarfogel and Sokolow, *Between Rashi and Maimonides*, 3-20, and Agoston Schmelowszky, “Messianic Dreams and Political Reality: The Case of Don Isaac Abravanel,” in Al-Azmeh and Bak, *Monotheistic Kingship*, 137-154.

Church's views of Judaism, with early Christian authors generally expressing a belief that their religion surpassed both paganism and Judaism.<sup>12</sup> Sometimes, as in the case of Pseudo-Augustine ("Quodvultdeus," d. c. 450), sermons enjoined Christians to heed only part of the Mosaic laws and ignore other laws described in Exodus or Leviticus.<sup>13</sup> The interpretations in these late antique sermons had a tremendous impact on medieval monastic thought, as much was incorporated in the *Libri Carolini* that set liturgical forms for the early medieval period, with the Pseudo-Augustine's depictions of Jews adopted wholesale into biblical exegesis.<sup>14</sup> Late antique heresies such as Donatism and Monophysitism attracted the attention of patristic theologians, and the authors found that in decrying heresy they opened opportunities for polemical writings against the Jews.<sup>15</sup>

Ambrose of Milan (339-397), for instance, used the example of Jesus's treatment of the Jewish moneylenders in the Temple as an allegory for demanding that the Church rid itself of the Arian heresy.<sup>16</sup>

12 Averil Cameron, "Byzantines and Jews: some recent work on early Byzantium," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 20 (1996), 249-274.

13 Pseudo-Augustine (*Quodvultdeus*), *Sermo IV: Contra Iudaeos paganos et arianos*, CCSL 60: 227-258.

14 Abigail Firey, "The Letter of the Law: Carolingian Exegetes and the Old Testament," in McAuliffe, et al, *Reverence for the Word*, 209-212; Ann Freeman, "Further Studies in the *Libri Carolini*: I. Paleographical Problems in *Vaticanus Latinus* 7207, II. 'Patristic Exegesis, Mozarabic Antiphons, and the *Vetus Latina*,'" *Speculum* 40: 2 (April, 1965), 235-236; McKitterick, *History and Memory*, 218-264; Thomas F.X. Noble, "From the *Libri Carolini* to the *Opus Caroli Regis* [Reviews article of *Opus Caroli Regis contra synodum*, ed. Ann Freeman]," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 9 (2000), 131-147; William Otten, "The Texture of Tradition. The Role of the Church Fathers in Carolingian Theology," in Backus, *Reception of Church Fathers*, II: 3-50.

15 For late antique heresies and responses, Ivor J. Davidson, "Later Theologians of the West," in Esler, *Early Christian World*, I: 602-635; and Stoyanov, *The Other God: Dualist Religions*, 124-154. For Christian associations of Jews with heretics, see Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 156-158; Sara Lipton, "Jews, Heretics, and the Sign of the Cat in the *Bible moralisée*," in *Word and Image* 8 (1992), 362-377; and, finally, Guy G. Stroumsa, "From Anti-Judaism to Antisemitism in Early Christianity?" in Limor and Stroumsa, *Contra Iudaeos*, 1-26, at 13-16.

16 Ambrose of Milan, *Sermo contra Auxentium de basilicis tradendis*, PL 16: 1015-1016.

Gaudentius of Brescia (d. c. 410), who had made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the late 380s, described how the birth of Christ was the only historically mitigating influence against the “avarice” of the Jews, compared the “perfidy” of the Jews to the Arian heresy, and argued that both groups must be removed by faithful Christians.<sup>17</sup> Augustine in his *On the City of God against the Pagans* (18: 46), was more measured in his response to the Jewish forerunners of Christianity, providing a template for Jewish-Christian relations that protected the Jews for more than seven hundred years from persecution. That is, in an exegesis of Psalms 59:12 (“Slay them not, lest at any time they forget your law; scatter them in your might”), Augustine established that Jews had to be protected for Christianity to thrive and achieve redemption at the end of time.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, in his *Tract against the Jews*, Augustine made it clear that—although they seemed to be as “blinded” and unable to perceive essential Christian truths in his own time as they had been when Christ had been crucified—the Jews must nevertheless be taught the proper reading and understanding of Scriptures by devout Christians.<sup>19</sup>

Such theological perceptions had a concrete effect upon the Jews’ legal status in the Roman Empire, as Christian emperors repeatedly made it clear in legal statutes (*Codex Theodosianus*) that Jews and their synagogues were to enjoy the protection of law.<sup>20</sup> The fact that the statutes had to be repeated implies, however, that the protection of law often was not enough. Popular violence against Jews throughout the Mediterranean in late antiquity and the early medi-

17 Gaudentius of Brescia, *Sermo XIII: De diversis capitulis tertius*, PL 20: 950B-952C; and *Sermo XIX: De diversis capitulis nonus*, PL 20: 967B-D.

18 Jeremy Cohen, “‘Slay them Not’: Augustine and the Jews and Modern Scholarship,” in *Medieval Encounters* 4 (1998), 78-92, at 79.

19 Augustine, *Tractatus adversus Iudaeos*, PL 42: 51B-52A.

20 Bernard S. Bachrach, “The Jewish Community in the Later Roman Empire as Seen in the *Codex Theodosianus*,” in Neusner and Frerichs, *To See Ourselves as Others See Us*, 391-421; B.S. Albert, “Isidore of Seville; His attitude towards Judaism and his impact on early medieval canon law,” in *Jewish Quarterly Review* 80 (1990), 207-220.



eval period is well attested.<sup>21</sup> Although Jews enjoyed something of a protected status (compared to heretical groups), the same law codes and church canons made it clear that imperial legislation prohibited the Christians themselves from participating with Jews at almost every level of society—from intermarriage, to dancing and dining with Jews, or even being educated by them in schools or judged by them in courts.<sup>22</sup>

By the beginning of the First Crusade, depictions of Jews in sermons were influenced by a long-standing Christian polemical tradition that perceived the Jews as necessary witnesses to Christian revelation. First, for the Jews of the early medieval period, Christian writers and theologians on the Continent contended with the reality of Jewish communities that had grown either in northwestern and northern Europe (Ashkenazic) and the Iberian Peninsula (Sephardic).<sup>23</sup> Their depictions, however, departed little from the stereotypes and polemics that had marked ancient and late antique perceptions of Jews. In one sermon, for example, Pope Gregory I the Great (590-604) explained that the Jews who persecuted Jesus and His followers eventually were burned in a “great fire” when the Temple was destroyed by Titus because of the Jews’ intrinsic malice toward Christianity, and also because they were incapable of understanding the Bible and significance of Jesus’s miracles.<sup>24</sup> Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636), in his tract, *On the Catholic Faith against the Jews*, made multiple indictments of the Jews that attacked them for crucifying Christ, accused them of being allied with the Antichrist, and suggested that the Jews belonged in exile or subjugation until

21 Gaddis, *Religious Violence*, 151-207; Tziona Grossmark, “The Inn as a Place of Violence and Danger in Rabbinic Literature,” in Drake, *Violence in Late Antiquity*, 55-66; Margaret R. Miles, “Santa Maria Maggiore’s Fifth-Century Mosaics: Triumphal Christianity and the Jews,” in Ferguson, *Christianity in Relation to Jews, Greeks, and Romans*, 63-84.

22 Linder, *Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*, 402-405.

23 Bachrach, *Early Medieval Jewish Policy*; M. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, 107-161; Dahan, *Christian Polemic against the Jews*; Gager, *Origins of Anti-Semitism*; Stow, *Alienated Minority*, 6-64.

24 Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Hiezechihalem*, CCSL (Turnout: Brepols, 1971), 142:10-13.



the time of their conversion to Christianity in the Last Days.<sup>25</sup>

Hagiographic accounts from the Merovingian period generally used Jews as cautionary examples for Christians. The anonymous tale, for example, of the mass conversion of Jews by Avitus at Clermont in the late sixth century praised the efficacy of the bishop's preaching and emphasized the purity of the five hundred white-robed Jewish converts.<sup>26</sup> Other saints' lives used the image of the Jew in comparison with the faithlessness of some Christians, as shown in the late-seventh century "Vision of Barontus" wherein the monk (Barontus) watched the archangel Raphael battle two demons for his soul before receiving a blessing from the Jewish patriarch Abraham that lets him back into the Christian world.<sup>27</sup> Gregory of Tours' *History of the Franks*, too, warned against trusting Jews in his story of the failure of a Jewish physician to cure the blind archdeacon of Bourges, Leunast, because in trying to cure his cataracts the Christian trusted in the lore of the Jews rather than in the divine mercy of Christ.<sup>28</sup> It was not until the eighth century that evidence appears for western Christians engaging perceptions of Jews as had been the case in Augustine's time. Amnon Linder has noted a kind of "escalating hysteria" in ecclesiastical canons during the Carolingian period that can be documented especially after the Muslim advances of 711 into the Iberian Peninsula, when lawmakers presumably feared that if the Saracens could make inroads against Christian society, so too, might other enemies of Christ (such as the Jews) if they were left unaddressed in the legal codes.<sup>29</sup>

For Carolingian sermon authors, the Jews were repeatedly in-

25 Isidore of Seville, *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos*, PL 83: 449, 467, 495.

26 Stow, *Alienated Minority*, 55-56. Thanks to Noel Lenski for drawing my attention to the fact that this anonymous tale seems to incorporate almost entirely the supposed mass conversion of Jews by Severus of Minorca; for more on this other tale, see *Severus of Minorca: Letter on the Conversion of the Jews*, ed. and trans. Scott Bradbury (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 43-52.

27 Walter Goffart, "The Conversions of Bishop Avitus and similar passages in Gregory of Tours," in Neusner and Frerichs, *To See Ourselves as Others See Us*, 473-497; Moreira, *Dreams*, 100-102.

28 Gregory of Tours, *Decem Libri Historiarum*, in *MGH Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in Usum Scholarum Separatim Editi*, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, 63 vols. (Hanover, 1871-1987), 10: 203.

29 Linder, *Jews in the Legal Sources*, 484-538.

voked as “witnesses” to Christian revelation, or else blamed for the ills of the Church. Hrabanus Maurus’ asserted the “spiritual” attributes of the Christian Word (Christ) should serve as a purgative for the “carnality” of the Jewish Levitical laws in much the same way that the Church should cleanse itself of the “leprosy” represented by heretics and Jews.<sup>30</sup> Agobard of Lyons (769-840) repeatedly clashed with the Jewish community in Lyons and, in his appeals to Louis the Pious for aid against them, the bishop excoriated the Jews as blasphemers against Christ, “misinterpreters” of the Bible, and generally worse than either Christian heretics or pagans.<sup>31</sup> The example of Bodo—a Christian who in 839 converted to Judaism as “Eleazar” in the Iberian city of Saragossa—embodied for Christians of the time the perceived threat of heresy and Judaism that Agobard feared, and the bishop wrote to Louis the Pious complaining of certain parishioners’ preferences for Jewish sermons to Christian ones.<sup>32</sup>

Lastly, in looking at chronicle evidence, the kind of blanket characterization that Notker the Stammerer made about Jews engaging “only in the practices of medicine and commerce” also fell in line with traditional polemics about appropriate roles for the Jew in Christian society.<sup>33</sup> Recent research that explicitly measures such polemics against late antique and early medieval economic realities has convincingly challenged such generalizations, revealing Jews to have been in occupations more diverse than medicine (physicians) and money-lending; indeed, landowning, silk-making, metalworking, mill and salt production, trade in crimson dyestuff (*kermes*),

30 Hrabanus Maurus, *Expositio in Leviticum*, PL 108: 386B-386D.

31 Agobard of Lyons, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, CCCM 52: 194. On Agobard, see Bat-Sheva Albert, “*Adversus Iudaeos* in the Carolingian Empire,” in Limor and Stroumsa, *Contra Iudaeos*, 119-142; J. Cohen, *Living Letters*, 123-145.

32 Bernard Blumenkranz, *Juifs et Chrétiens dans le monde occidental 430-1096* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1960), 162; Robert Bonfil, “Cultural and Religious Traditions in Ninth-Century French Jewry,” in *Jewish Intellectual History in the Middle Ages*, ed. Joseph Dan (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishing, 1994), 1-17.

33 Notker the Stammerer, *Gesta Karoli*, MGH *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in Usum Scholarum Separatim Editi*, 63 vols. (Hanover, 1871-1987), 12: 19-21. For review of polemics in the early medieval period, see Chazan, *European Jewry & First Crusade*, 11-37, and *Medieval Stereotypes*, 19-40.

and spice-trading were just some of the activities that brought Jews into repeated and sustained contact with western Christians in the medieval world.<sup>34</sup>

### **New Babylonians, “Jewish Heretics,” and the Rule of Christ and the Devil— Perceptions of Jews in Sermons, 1095-1193**

Christian perceptions of Jews, therefore, were both fixed in the minds of Pope Urban II’s audience when he gave his sermon at Clermont in 1095, albeit those images were also often associated negatively with apocalyptic biblical typologies. Popes from Gregory the Great (d. 604 A.D.) through Calixtus II (d. 1124) had made some attempts to ameliorate public perception of the Jews, though, adopting Augustine’s theological tolerance via bulls that explicitly protected the Jews from harm, persecution, or death; for example, Calixtus’s bull *Sicut Judeis* (c. 1120) had reemphasized the Augustinian mandate that sought to prevent Christians from a variety of aggressions against Jews.<sup>35</sup>

The Church’s efforts found some support from secular rulers in Germany and France; for example, Henry IV’s castigation of communities at Speyer and Mainz in 1096 during the pogroms of the First Crusade and, half a century later, the attempted interventions by Louis VII before the Second Crusade.<sup>36</sup> Undeniably, though, a shift in attitudes about Jews began to occur in the middle decades of the twelfth century. Jews were no longer considered respected ancestors of the “good news” of the Christian gospels but, rather, as

34 See J.-P. Devroey, “La participation des Juifs au commerce dans le monde franc (Vie-Xe siècles),” in Dierkens and Sansterre, *Voyages et voyageurs à Byzance*, 339-374; Lopez and Raymond, *Medieval Trade in Mediterranean World*, 29-33; McCormick, *Origins of European Economy*, 649-653; Toch, *Economic History of the Jews*. For nuanced article on Jews throughout Mediterranean in antiquity and early medieval period, see Fred Astren, “Gotein, Medieval Jews, and the ‘New Mediterranean Studies,’” in *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 102.4 (Fall 2012) 513-531.

35 Anna Sapir Abulafia, “The Ideology of Reform and Changing Ideas concerning Jews in the Works of Rupert of Deutz and Hermannus Quondam Iudeus,” in Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, XV: 43-63 [Orig. printed in *Jewish History* 7 (1993), 43-63.]; R.I. Moore, *Formation of Persecuting Society*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (2007), 26-41.

36 Morris, *The Papal Monarchy*, 355; see also, Dahan, *Christian Polemic against the Jews*, 14-15; and Irven M. Resneck, “The Falsification of Scripture and Medieval and Christian and Jewish Polemics,” *Medieval Encounters* 2 (1996), 344-46.

outsiders who were paradoxically living within a Christendom that no longer desired the Jews' presence. Indeed, Jews were increasingly perceived as a threat to the Christian communities in France, England, and Germany in spite of papal initiatives by Pope Calixtus II or the actions of highly regarded members of the Church such as Bernard of Clairvaux (in his well-known castigation of Radulf over pogroms that preceded the Second Crusade).<sup>37</sup>

When contrasted with the early twelfth century trend toward some tolerance of Jews, however, we see that negative perceptions of the Jews became intensely antagonistic as the century progressed. These perceptions appeared in a variety of ways. First, the barring of Jews within Christian communities from trades except those of moneylenders or migratory merchants had the effect of excluding Jews from participation in an economically developing (and increasingly urban) Europe. Moreover, given that the Church prohibited usury and associated it with filth and sordidness, Jews found themselves increasingly vilified and shunned in major cities that were dominated by trade- and craft-guilds that needed and hated the Jews' presence.<sup>38</sup> Secondly, despite the attempts by popes and rulers to mandate tolerant behavior toward the Jews during this period, the killing of Jews in pogroms that began in earnest with the First Crusade's massacres in the Rhineland—and which flared up throughout the twelfth century (in the years of the Second Crusade 1146-1149, and also the massacre at Blois in 1171)—revealed a European culture whose perception of the Jews had a virulence of its own that went beyond papal or royal legislation.<sup>39</sup> Finally, an increased attention among Christian theologians such as Peter the Venerable to

37 For recent evaluation, see James Kroemer, "Vanquish the Haughty and Spare the Subjected: A Study of Bernard of Clairvaux's Position on Muslims and Jews," in *Medieval Encounters* 18 (2012), 55-92.

38 Daniel Bornstein, "Law, Religion, and Economics: Jewish Moneylenders in Christian Cortona," in Marino and Kuehn, *Renaissance of Conflicts*, 241-256; Rowan W. Dorin, "Canon Law and the Problem of Expulsion: The Origins and Interpretation of *Usurarum voraginem* (VI 5.5.1)," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Kanonistische Abteilung* 130 (2013), 129-161; Little, *Religious Poverty and Profit Economy*, 42-57.

39 R.I. Moore, "Anti-Semitism and the Birth of Europe," in Wood, *Christianity and Judaism*, 33-57.

biblical exegesis of both the Old and New Testaments resulted in Jews being redefined into a category of “heretics” to Christianity because of their stubborn adherence to the Torah and collective refusal to acknowledge the fulfillment of a messianic promise in their own religion that was Christ.<sup>40</sup>

Whether or not these trends in perceiving Jews were introduced (or ignored) in the sermon literature of the period now needs to be engaged. During the Second Crusade (1145-1149), for example, sermon authors constantly tried to reconcile the gospel and Augustinian interpretations of Jews as necessary witnesses to Christian revelation with assertions of the superiority of the Church (*ecclesia*) over the Synagogue (*synagoga*) without attacking the Jews themselves. Bernard of Clairvaux’s vast corpus includes at least five sermons that concerned Jews that, respectively, (1) cast the Church as representing the true faith of Christianity with the Synagogue conversely signifying the “perfidy” of the Jews, (2) attributed blame for Christ’s death to the Jews because they refused to believe that he fulfilled the messianic promise of their own Scriptures, and, (3) used an allegory of “husband and wife” to demonstrate the eschatological expectation that Jews shall “return” to Christianity at the end of time for the sake of Salvation.<sup>41</sup>

In one sermon, Bernard described the Jews as worthy models for imitation for the Cistercians. When discussing the purification rites that Jews observed at the synagogue (Acts 22:26, at which Paul and his followers make public their observation of accomplishing the days of purification), Bernard enjoined his brethren to achieve a similar self-purification by adapting the rites of the Jews to their own environment, with observances that included constrained chastity,

40 J. Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 25-32; Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion*, 291-295; and Gavin I. Langmuir, “Prolegomena to Any Present Analysis of Hostility against Jews,” *Social Science Information* 15 (1976), 689-727.

41 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermo XIV: De Ecclesia fidelium Christianorum et de Synagoga Judaeorum perfidorum*, PL 183:2, 839A-843C; Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermo LX: De incredulitate Judaeorum qua compleverunt mensuram patrum suorum occidendo Christum*, PL 183:2, 1066B-1070D; Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermo LXXVIII: De amore tenaci et indissolubi, quo anima tenet sponsum; item de reditu sponsi in fine saeculi ad Synagogam Judaeorum*, PL 183:2, 1163A-1166B.

fasting and abstinence, manual labor, vigilant watchfulness (against the shadows and darkness, temptations of the night), silent religious customs, and discipline.<sup>42</sup> Here Bernard remained focused on Paul's observance of ancient Hebraic rituals whose applications could be transformed into Christian use without running afoul of some "Judaizing" fears held by his contemporaries.<sup>43</sup>

Peter of Celle also tried to present Jews in a positive light, with emphasis on the parts of the Hebraic past that should be retained in the Christian present. In one sermon Peter asserted that, while Christianity should respect aspects of Judaic traditions from "Jacob's tabernacle," the only components really worth retaining were the writings of the Prophets, the rabbinical letters of the Apostles, and the authority of the Church granted *via* the Judeo-Christian Scriptures.<sup>44</sup> In another sermon filled with martial language that described the "armies" God commanded, Peter used Genesis as the basis for a story about how God's army of angels was replaced on Earth by the *genus humanum*. Peter's exegesis stipulated that the catastrophic failure of Adam and Eve was akin to the collective failures of the Jews, which made necessary the advent of Christ and the Redemption afforded by death and resurrection.<sup>45</sup>

Yet, like Bernard, for all his efforts to portray Christianity as superior to Judaism, Peter of Celle sought also to characterize the Jews in a way that made their presence as witnesses during the Last Judgment explicable to his brethren. In perhaps the most explicit of his sermons on the theme of Judaism, Peter devoted almost exclusive attention to distinguishing the differences between Abraham's sons,

42 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermo II: De spiritualibus nuptiis in evangelica historia designatis*, PL 183:2, 160D-161A, and 161A-C.

43 Michael A. Signer, "Consolation and Confrontation: Jewish and Christian Interpretation of the Prophetic Books," in Heffernan and Berman, *Scripture and Pluralism*, 77-93, at 82-84; Jan M. Ziolkowski, "Put in No-Man's-Land: Guibert of Nogent's Accusations against a Judaizing and Jew-Supporting Christian," in Singer and Van Engen, *Jews and Christians*, 110-122.

44 Peter of Celle, *Sermo LXVI: De Transfiguratione Domini II*, PL 202: 842D.

45 Peter of Celle, *Sermo XIX: Dominica in medio Quadragesimae*, PL 202: 695C.

Ishmael and Isaac. Peter associated the way of Ishmael with the course of Jewish history, and Isaac with that of Christianity. Quoting from Paul's letter to the Romans (Romans 3:1-31), he made the case that—in spite of all the workings of the law and the observations of rituals and sacraments—“no man was justified in the sight of God,” and therefore both Jews and Gentiles alike were sinful by nature.

The correction of that sinful nature, Peter continued, occurred when John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the Jordan River and thereby accomplished what neither Moses nor Aaron could—the creation of a new covenant; specifically, in keeping with the subject matter of the sermon, a covenant that would grant the remission of sin to the line of Isaac. Isaac was introduced as the exemplar of the “just man” (*homo iustus*), whose justice Peter's audience could discern if it looked to how Isaac spent the hours of his old age. Peter related those hours to those in the monastic day, and then extrapolated his discussion of the proper use of time to the Creation account in Genesis and how those hours and days had analogues in the sacraments of the Church. The final part of the sermon returned to the primary topics of Isaac and Ishmael, and how the former peacefully lived out his remaining days and the latter retreated to Babylon.

The conclusion of Peter of Celle's sermon listed the errors of Ishmael and the Jews, foremost among which were the following: “blindness of the mind” (*caecitas mentis*), “deception” (*spiritus mendax*), and “contempt for God” (*contemptu dei*).<sup>46</sup> In this sermon, particularly, one sees writ large the paradoxical synthesis that Christian theologians of the twelfth century were making with respect to the Jews; on the one hand, in using Ishmael and Isaac, Peter of Celle felt quite comfortable appropriating two figures from the Hebraic past to exemplify his polemical points, but on the other hand those points were directed against the Jewish past for the sake of praising the Christian present.

Christian exegetes from the time of the Gregorian Reform had

<sup>46</sup> Peter of Celle, *Sermo XX: Scriptum est, quoniam Abraham duos filios habuit*, PL 202: 699B-702C.



sought to present a unified Christendom by casting back both to the early days of the Church and to the Old Testament and by depicting a prefiguration of Christianity wherever they could.<sup>47</sup> Chroniclers of the twelfth century ranged widely in how they described the Jews, revealing a gamut of emotions and perspectives in their writings. Guibert of Nogent wrote angrily at the disbelief of the Jews toward the Virgin Mary and Immaculate Conception, a condition that he believed made the Jews fundamentally unable to understand Christianity and therefore removed from them the hope of salvation at the end of time.<sup>48</sup> Otto of Freising, chronicler of the Second Crusade, wrote optimistically about the Jews in both his histories. In his *Chronicle of the Two Cities* a massive, hidden enclave of Jews lived by the Caspian Sea awaiting the voyage southward to serve as witnesses to Christian Revelation after the armies of Christ had defeated those of the Antichrist in Jerusalem.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, in his *History of the Deeds of the Emperor Frederick*, Otto described the Rhineland pogroms of 1146-1147 were incited by Radulf, and the way in which Bernard of Clairvaux stopped the slaughter by writing letters to the German bishops reminding them of the Jews prophesied role as witness to the *parousia*.<sup>50</sup>

By the time of the Third Crusade, however—despite the fact that some chroniclers like Gerald of Wales vilified the Jews and spoke of their envy of Christianity<sup>51</sup>—Jews were also being used as rhetorical devices to illustrate Christian understandings of Hebraic tenets. Moreover, the Jews were used as scholastic “proofs” for demonstrating the superiority of Christianity over Judaism (such as found

47 Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories*, 151-191.

48 Guibert of Nogent, *Tractatus de Incarnatione*, PL 156: 505-507. [On this topic, see Miri Rubin, “Bodies in the Jewish-Christian Debate,” in Kay and Rubin, *Framing Medieval Bodies*, 123-137.]

49 Otto of Freising, *Historia de duabus civitatibus*, Adolf Hofmeister, ed. MGH SS, 8 vols. (Hanover: Hahn, 1867), VII: 93.

50 Otto of Freising, *Gesta Friderici primi imperatoris*, MGH SS 4 vols. (Hanover: 1867), I: 58-59.

51 Gerald of Wales, *Opera*, J.S. Brewer, J.F. Dimoch, and G.E. Warner, eds., Rolls Series, 8 vols. (London: 1861-1891), 5:150.

in Peter Abelard's "Dialogue between a Philosopher, Jew, and a Christian"). This resulted in chroniclers such as Richard of Devizes depicting Jews in their histories as foils for critiquing problems in England during the absence of Richard I while on the Third Crusade. In his chronicle, Richard of Devizes used a Jew to comment on the poor condition and evil inhabitants of many English cities and the way in which a properly Christian kingdom might restore order.<sup>52</sup> The ambivalence about how to depict Jews was an essential paradox in monastic writings that make it almost impossible to generalize about consistent portrayals of the Jews in sermons; indeed, the safest assertion would be the fact that all authors sought biblical authority or reference when making an attack on the Jews or defending them as necessary witnesses.

Twelfth-century sermons also presented the Jews as irrational in the face of Christian reason, a "blindness of the mind" before Christian Revelation, and as susceptible to what Iogna-Prat (citing Peter the Venerable's views) called a "topsy-turvy" world view that was antithetical to Christianity and which had been part of *Contra Iudaeos* polemics since antiquity.<sup>53</sup> Peter Abelard faulted the Jews for not possessing a mystical or spiritual understanding of the Scriptures, claiming that as a people they took words too literally.<sup>54</sup> Hildebert of Lavardin speculated in one sermon that if the Jews simply knelt and professed belief in Christ, this alone would offset their ancient refusal to believe that the prophets' predictions had been manifested in Christ, and His miracles (like the Virgin birth) would illuminate Jewish understanding of their own Torah.<sup>55</sup> Arnold of Bonaville likened the fourth verse in Psalm 132 ("Because God offered benediction there, and all the way to life everlasting") to a new, four-wheeled chariot of David that conveyed the chests containing the Old and New Testaments into Jerusalem, with great

52 Richard of Devizes, *The Chronicle of Richard of Devizes*, ed. and trans. J. T. Appleby (London: Nelson's Medieval Texts, 1963), 62-64.

53 Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion*, 301-321.

54 Peter Abelard, *Sermo in Purificatione Sanctae Mariae*, PL 178, col. 390.

55 Hildebert of Lavardin, *Sermo CI*, PL 171: 812B-813C.

noise and jubilation and accompaniment by all kinds of musical instruments.<sup>56</sup> While he acknowledged that interpreting David as a figurative Christ was not original, Arnold stated that the cart and the chests could be seen in a new light: the chests bearing the Old and New Testaments should be perceived as the Church. By means of the “sound” of confession and the rejoicing of the devout, (*clangore confessionis et júbilo devotionis*) one could reach all the way to the celestial Jerusalem by means of a cart whose wheels were (1) joy in God, (2) goodness by proximity to God (*imitatio Christi*), (3) life in a body incorruptible (everlasting), and (4) blessedness that comes from having a complete and fulfilled soul.<sup>57</sup>

Arnold then wrote that he would be silent about the old-established customs of the Jews that also included circular objects like the wheels of his allegorical cart—for example, “...gold crowns, necklaces, small baubles, rings, and many other things formed in this fashion...” —but that the Jews were unable to conduct their rituals without recourse to physical objects. Without “apparatus,” Arnold asserted, the Jews “...could not complete the Temple, not erect the tabernacle (nor altar or table), not bear the ark, nor throw the bolts (to the Temple), burn candelabra, or even fasten [their] ephods (i.e., upper garments of Jewish rabbis).”<sup>58</sup> Instead of the Judaic tradition, Arnold concluded, the Christian Church should inspire all people to believe in the Sacraments and its own spiritual perfection. Indeed, he emphasized, Christianity’s New Testament provided the deepest mysteries—the greatest and most fear-inducing of which was the “Body of Christ.”<sup>59</sup> Yet, in another example of how Christian writers of the time tended not to discard completely their religion’s Judaic inheritance, Arnold ended the sermon with an allegorical admixture of both religions that left room for the Jews to fulfill their functions

56 Arnold of Bonavalle, *Sermo IV*, PL 189: 1578B.

57 Arnold of Bonavalle, *Sermo IV*, PL 189, 1578D-1579B.

58 Arnold of Bonavalle, *Sermo IV*, Pl. 189, 1580B. [Taceo illius Judaicae institutionis coronas aureas, circulos, sphaerulas, annutos, et caetera multa in hunc modum formata, sine quibus nec templum perfici, nec rationale superhumerali potest connecti. . . .]

59 Arnold of Bonavalle, *Sermo IV*, PL 189: 1580C.

as witnesses in the Last Days.

In this respect, the emphasis that Arnold of Bonavalle's sermon placed on Jewish attention to the physical world was in keeping with tendencies of the time to present the Jews as incapable of understanding the "true," spiritual, and ultimately intangible meaning of scriptures. Again, such "blindness of the mind" rendered the Jews deserving of only scorn from twelfth-century sermon writers. Guibert of Nogent, for example, wrote a polemical treatise defending Christ's incarnation against Jewish detractors, with passages that stated the Jews were unable to understand the spirituality that underlay the physicality of the Incarnation, and, further, that Jews were unable to go beyond a literal interpretation of the Old Testament because they were so preoccupied with the filth of making money, a preoccupation that Guibert saw contrasting directly with the purity of the Virgin Mary.<sup>60</sup> Likewise, Peter the Venerable accused the Jews of being too literal-minded when trying to understand the Bible, concerned as they were with the occupation of moneylending.<sup>61</sup>

Many twelfth-century sermons portrayed Jews as enemies of the Church, along with pagans, Saracens, and heretics. One of Bruno of Segni's sermons, for instance, asserted that despite the fact that Mosaic law had been passed through the Jewish priesthood, the Jews had brought death to humanity because of Adam's sin (as opposed to Christ, who Bruno understood as the "second Adam" and the harbinger of eternal life); Jews were thus, along with heretics, "...examples to us of those who, following their own pleasures, will die outside of the Church."<sup>62</sup> Honorius Augustodunensis (d. 1155) castigated the Jews in two of his sermons, blaming them for handing Jesus over to Pilate in one instance, but with an explanation for that betrayal which deserves some attention because of what the sermon reveals about Honorius's conception of history.

60 Guibert of Nogent, *Tractatus de Incarnatione contra Iudaeos*, PL 156: 489-528; section on money and Mary, 492B-C.

61 Peter the Venerable, *Letters of Peter the Venerable*, ed. Giles Constable, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), I: 328-329.

62 Bruno of Segni, PL 165: 862C-863A.

In the sermon, Honorius depicted the Jews as citizens initially of Jerusalem, but lately of Babylon. He did this by explaining that in the distant past, Christ and the Devil were the respective rulers of Jerusalem and Babylon with Lucifer ruling his city because of the revolt that he led against the celestial Jerusalem in the “first civil war” (*primum civile bellum*).<sup>63</sup> After a lengthy discourse on Jewish history, from the slaying of Abel by Cain to a catalog of the problems that Babylon’s presence near Jerusalem caused in the biblical past, Honorius stated that even in the present day “certain members of the Synagogue were armed against members of the Church” (... *singula membra Synagogae armantur contra membra Ecclesiae*) and were therefore part of a new Babylon rising in the east whose numbers included many enemies. He then enumerated pagans, Jews, heretics, and “bad Catholics” (*mali Catholici*) as the collective combatants who secretly assailed the spiritual Jerusalem (Church and its believers) from within.<sup>64</sup>

When writing about the dangers of the Cathar heresy, Eckbert of Schönau wrote a sermon in which the Jews were likened to the heretics because their beliefs (and refusal to acknowledge Christ) placed them outside Christendom.<sup>65</sup> The association of Jews with prevalent heresies of the time was uncommon, and the only resonance of Eckbert’s thinking would be that found in Joachim of Fiore’s (d. 1202) tract “Against the Jews” later in the century wherein Joachim declared that Jewish “carnality” made the people akin to the Patarenes in blinding their ability to grasp Scriptures spiritually.<sup>66</sup>

Some sermons by popular authors of the twelfth century provide evidence for similar martial language and polemical terminology

63 Honorius Augustodunensis, PL 172, cols. 1093D-1094C.

64 Honorius Augustodunensis, PL 172: 1097A-1098A. [Haec Hierusalem ab hostibus exterius oppugnatur, a civibus interius occulte impugnatur. Pagani quippe, Judaei et haeretici, ejus hostes, numero exercitu eam exterius machinis persecutionum et arietibus perversorum dogmatum oppugnant; mali autem catholici, nominatenus ejus cives, sed occulte hostes, pravus moribus interius eam impugnant.]

65 Eckbert of Schönau, *Sermones contra Catharos*, PL 195: 12-98.

66 Anna Sapir Abulafia, “The Conquest of Jerusalem: Joachim of Fiore and the Jews,” in Bull and Housely, *Experience of Crusading*, I: 127-146, at 141.

concerning the Jews that could be interpreted as rallying Christendom against enemies of their religion. For all the fair-mindedness that Bernard of Clairvaux demonstrated in some sermons about the Jews—that is, his emphasis in many sermons on the appropriation of rites and beliefs found in the Torah or ancient Jewish traditions was acceptable for use by Christians—he, too, was just as capable of vilifying them and casting the Hebraic past in a negative light.<sup>67</sup> In one sermon, Bernard departed from what might be described as his generally “utilitarian” attitude toward the Jews and engaged in perhaps one of the most sustained diatribes in the period. Throughout a sermon that repeatedly highlighted the mocking of Jesus by the high Jewish priests in the Gospels (Mark 25:32, Matthew 27:42), Bernard characterized the Jews with terminology that included words and phrases such as “blasphemer,” “profaner,” “liar,” “serpent of old” and described Jews as possessed of “poisoned tongue, evil words, and worthless speech,” “deniers of the King,” and, finally, “casters of false accusations.”<sup>68</sup>

The vilification of the Jews in this sermon seems at odds with Bernard’s efforts to save Jews from pogroms in the months after the declaration of the Second Crusade in 1146, but actually the sen-

67 Robert Chazan, “Twelfth-Century Perceptions of the Jews: A Case Study of Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter the Venerable,” in J. Cohen, *From Witness to Witchcraft*, 187-201.

68 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermo 3: De septem singaculis quae solvit Agnus*, PL 183:2, 273D-277C. [Vicit [the Lion] plane malitiam sapientia, attingens a fine usque ad finem fortiter, et suaviter universa disponens: sed pro me fortiter, suaviter mihi. Vicit Judaeorum **blasphemias** [my emphasis, *passim*] in patibulo, fortem armatum alligavit in atrio, et de ipso mortis imperio triumphavit...Quid tu, Judaeae, qui pridie ante crucem agitabas caput **sacrilegum**?...Non est hoc, Caipha, quod paulo ante dicebas: Expediit ut unus moriatur homo pro populo, et non tota gens pereat. At illud, quia mendacium non erat, non loquebaris de proprio, non a temetipso dicebas: Si rex Israel est, descendat de cruce, hoc plane tuum est; magis autem ejus **qui mendax est ab initio**. Quid enim consequentiae videtur habere ut descendat, si rex est; et non magis ascendat? Sic non meministi **serpens antique**, quam confusus, abscesseris olim, cum dicere praesumpsisses: Mitte te deorsum; et: Haec omnia tibi dabo, si procidens adoraveris me? Sic tibi, Judaeae Christus, inquit, rex Israel descendat de cruce...O venenata lingua, verbum malitiae, sermo nequam... Sic, tibi, Judaeae, excidit quod audisti quia Dominus regnavit a ligno, ut **regem abneges**, quia manet in ligno? Sed forsitan nec audisti...quia non Judaeis, sed nationibus haec annuntiatio debebatur. Dicite, inquit, in nationibus, quia Dominus regnavit a lingo... Jam si confutandis **Judaeorum calumniis** sufficere videtur hoc ipsum, quod clauso egressus est monumento, cui insultantes dicebant: Si rex Israel est, descendat de cruce....]

timents were in keeping with his general attitude about the Jews: namely, that since it was a foregone conclusion that the Jews were “ancient enemies” of Christians (an appropriation of Psalms 59: 2-4), Christian thinkers should neither pay much attention to them nor do them harm because of their spiritual blindness to the tenets of Christian revelation.<sup>69</sup>

The “blindness of the Jews” and the need for faithful Christians to wrest themselves bloodily from a “prison of sin” built for humanity as a consequence of that blindness was the theme of one of Peter of Celle’s sermons. In Sermon #42, Peter of Celle began with a quotation from Psalms 145:10, “A new king, a new law...” (*Novus rex, nova lex*) and continued with a comparison that posited Christ’s Resurrection as ushering in a new age for Christians just as Adam and Eve begat the same for the Jews in the Genesis. But, maintaining this common typological distinction that marked “new” Christians in distinction from “old” Hebrews, Peter introduced Lucifer who, accompanied by a band of soldiers that had repudiated God, departed from Heaven and set up camp in the lowest part of Hell.<sup>70</sup> Left with a damaged heavenly kingdom, and intent upon “patching it up” (*resarcire*), God replaced the fallen angels with the *genus humanum* (again, understood as the Hebrews) so as to increase the number of His angelic army that had been depleted by Lucifer’s departure.<sup>71</sup>

Then, Peter likened the inhabitants of Paradise (Adam and Eve) to soldiers who have “sworn a common oath, undergone first trials on the practice ground, and become accustomed to all kinds of weapons.” He stated that these warriors of God had eventually succumbed to temptation and evil, and, while the Jews might have been penitent, they were too late in that remorse because the inevitabil-

69 Anna Abulafia, “Christians and Jews in the High Middle Ages: Christian Views of Jews,” in Cluse, *Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 25; Chazan, “From the First Crusade to the Second: Evolving Perceptions of the Christian-Jewish Conflict,” in Singer and Van Engen, *Jews and Christians*, 48-49.

70 Peter of Celle, PL 202: 771A.

71 Peter of Celle, PL 202: 771A. [Resarcire autem damnum regni et numerum exercitus sui intendens rex ille sapiens et potens genus humanum pro grege angelorum substituit...]



ity of their actions had condemned humanity until the coming of Christ, “...as withered before flowering, aborted before birthing, and perished before its time,” with the cost borne by all the generations from the tree of Adam and Eve.<sup>72</sup> With the Resurrection, Peter of Celle continued, Christ removed the veil with which the eyes of the Jews had been blindfolded (...*panno illo quo Judaei oculos eius velaverunt*).<sup>73</sup> With that unveiling, Peter of Celle told his audience that Christians could now perceive the prison of sin and penetrate it to undermine its fortifications.<sup>74</sup>

The Resurrection of Christ, consequently, was the empowering act “... that united the kingdom of heaven with the worldly realm, and joined together those realms in a place where both intersect—the Cross,” and where, Peter concluded, angels were able to take the guise of heavenly warriors and assist the *milites Christi* in their battles against sin on earth (...*ubi tanquam coelestes milites assistant*); ultimately, if those battles were won for the sake of Christ, human beings would “...as dogs, lick the blood of the Lord as it ran downward to the earth, in order that by such a drink they could be redeemed and inebriated” (...*et homines tanquam canes lambunt sanguinem decurrentem in terra, ut potu illo redimantur, et inebrientur*).<sup>75</sup> Such language and imagery parallels the contemporary belief that dying on a crusade shared a spiritual kinship with Christian martyrdom, a maxim extant in monastic culture since Pope Gregory VII’s 1074 proposal for an “expedition to the East,” and it has been shown that

72 Peter of Celle, PL 202: 771B-C. [Tam cita vero subsecuta est direptio et subversio novi illius coloni paradisi, qui quasi tironus tirocinii tempora in gymnasio illo interim compleret, quousque omnimoda armorum habitudine angelicam militiam, et tunc in eadem tam puritate quam charitate regis sui similiter conjuraret militiam. Tam, inquam, repente tironus iste succubuit, ut ante florem aresceret, ante partum abortiret, ante tempus periret... Coagulo namque vitiate radicis, tota ramorum condensitas male fermentata, pleniore respergebat acetositate quidquid virgulti generatione filiorum germinaret tota illa silva generis humani ex arbore Adam et Evae... ]

73 Peter of Celle, PL 202: 771D.

74 Peter of Celle, PL 202: 772B-C.

75 Peter of Celle, PL 202: 773A. [Consociavit regno coelesti regnum mundi et compaginavit umbilico terrae in bivio coeli et terrae, id est cruce, ubi angeli tanquam coelestes milites assistunt, certamen regis sui aspicientes; et homines tanquam canes lambunt sanguinem decurrentem in terra, ut potu illo redimantur, et inebrientur.]

Bernard of Clairvaux consciously applied that maxim in his preaching of the Second Crusade.<sup>76</sup> Here, with Peter of Celle's imagery of blood intoxicating the soldiers of Christ, one is left with an explicit example in the sermon literature itself of how an ancient Christian tradition of venerating martyrs was conjoined with what Jonathan Riley-Smith termed "killing as an act of Christian love."<sup>77</sup>

When we step back to contextualize this kind of language, the ecstatic vision that Peter of Celle described in this sermon was one that might be applied to the killing of Jews, heretics, pagans, or any others who might have to fall at the "angels' feet" for the sake of fulfilling what the sermon author perceived as an "inebriating" mandate from God. As such, sermons such as this one foreshadowed the kind of exhortation that glorified the necessary sacrifices of "soldiers of Christ" and enjoined Christians to go on crusade as an act of penance that Sylvia Schein has found in western poetry after Saladin's conquest of Jerusalem.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, Peter's sermon can be contextualized within a monastic culture that tended to attribute great powers of agency, intercession, and spiritual intervention to holy sites and saints (particularly if those saints also were martyrs). This assessment of sermon depictions shows monastic authors of the twelfth century were increasingly applying that excitement to the work of excluding others such as the Jews, who were characterized as living in opposition to these ecstatic expressions of Christian belief.<sup>79</sup> A series of Richard of St. Victor's homilies gives us an explicit example of how that exclusion worked in the sermon tradition.

76 H.E.J. Cowdrey, "Pope Gregory VII and Martyrdom," in Balard, et al, *Dei gesta per Francos*, 3-12.

77 Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Crusading as an Act of Love," *History* 65 (1980), 177-192.

78 On the anonymous poems, "*Jerusalem, civitas inclita*" and "*Quod spiritu David precipuit*," and Berter of Orléans' "*Juxta threnos Jeremiae*," see Schein, *Gateway to Heavenly City*, 179-180.

79 Hans Henrik Lohfert Jørgenson, "Cultic Vision—Seeing as Ritual: Visual and Liturgical Experience in the Early Christian and Medieval Church," in Petersen, et al, *Appearance of Medieval Rituals*, 173-97, at 185; Patrick Geary, "Reflections on Historiography and the Holy: Center and Periphery," in Mortensen, *Making of Christian Myths*, 323-29, at 327.

**Jews as Discredited Witnesses:  
Richard of St. Victor's Balak / Balaam Sermon Cycle**

A certain number of Richard of St. Victor's sermons combined aspects of the depictions of Jews as "blind" in their understanding of God, as necessary witnesses to Christian Revelation, and as contemporary enemies of Christendom. These sermons bear closer examination as an example of the exegetical transformations occurring in western Christendom's perceptions of Jews by the middle of the twelfth century. The three-sermon cycle by Richard of St. Victor that focused on the Balak and Balaam story of Numbers 22-24 reveals the exegetical means by which some twelfth-century theologians attempted to extirpate any significance the Jews might have in both a Christian context, and even in the context of the Jews perceiving their own biblical past.<sup>80</sup>

In these sermons, Richard emphasized a "misdirection" of the Jews both in history and in their understanding of God that was not corrected until the advent of Christ, an allegorically expressed belief that the "ships" of monotheistic belief that had initially been manned by the Jews were now populated by Christians, and a notion that Christians should "imitate" Jewish symbols of justice, but live devotedly to Christ.

In the initial sermon, Richard related the essential elements of the story of Balak, the king of Moab who sought to have a prophet (Balaam) condemn the Israelites who had encamped on the plains outside his city. God intervenes before Balaam can make the condemnation. An angel of God appears to Balaam's donkey and the animal halts, forcing Balaam to recognize the injustice he is about to commit. The prophet obeyed the sign from Yahweh and blessed the Israelites. Balaam's decision naturally brought him into conflict with the king, and at the end of Numbers 24 Balaam went so far as to prophesy the doom of Balak's kingdom by a "star" from the house of Jacob that shall smite the lands of Moab with a mighty "scepter."

80 Richard of St. Victor, *Sermo LXXVI: Ex verbis ejusdem Balaam in festo quorumlibet sanctorum*, PL 177: 1139 B-1142 B; *Sermo LXXVII: In festo quorumlibet sanctorum de ejusdem Balaam verbis*, PL 177: 1142B-1145 D; *Sermo LXXVIII: In festo quorumlibet sanctorum de tertia benedictione Balaam*, PL 177: 1146A-1149 B.

For daring to assert that the Israelites should pose such a threat, Balaam the Prophet lost all the wealth and lands that had been promised him if he were to have followed through on his promise to curse the Israelites. In this context, Richard wrote that Balaam's decision to bless the Israelites should be a lesson in divine intervention because the donkey recognized God's presence in the angel before Balaam himself did. Richard elaborated on this, writing in his sermon that Balaam's avaricious nature made false any of his prophecies, including any "blessing" that was given to the Israelites. Here Richard quoted 2 Peter 2:17, where Peter stated such prophets as Balaam (or those who seek material gain as a reward for sharing their visions of God) are "wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest, to which the mist of darkness is reserved forever."<sup>81</sup>

Richard of St. Victor's interpretation of Peter's epistle held that Peter was not necessarily advocating a blessing for the Israelites. Instead, Richard noted, if one paid heed to the conclusion of the epistle, Peter emphasized the apostasy of those who would disavow God for material things, stating that even those who learn of Jesus Christ cannot return to the lives they enjoyed previous to that knowledge, and that people such as Balaam resonate with the Old Testament proverb of acting "like a dog, return to their own vomit, or a sow that was washed to wallowing in the mire." (Proverbs 26:11 and 2 Peter 2:22). By characterizing Balaam in such a manner, by emphasizing the essentially "unworthy" nature of the prophet, Richard said that Balaam's blessing of the Jews was rendered impotent, even if it was in keeping with the angel's injunction, and that Jesus's condemnation of the Pharisees and Sadducees in the Temple was justified because any blessings that the Israelites had received in their own books were unworthy of God's favor. In this revision of the traditional interpretation of the Balak and Balaam story, Richard concluded that only by Christ's advent were the Jews truly blessed and saved from their own impiety.<sup>82</sup>

81 Richard of St. Victor, *Sermo LXXVI: Ex verbis ejusdem Balaam in festo quorumlibet sanctorum*, PL 177: 1142A. [...hii sunt fonts sine aqua et nebulae turbinibus exagitatae quibus caligo tenebrarum reservatur... ]

82 Richard of St. Victor, *Sermo LXXVI: Ex verbis ejusdem Balaam in festo quorumlibet sanctorum*, PL 177: 1141 B.

In his second sermon on the topic (Sermon 77), Richard discussed how before the advent of Jesus Christ the Jews had been misdirected not only in their own historical trajectory, but also in their understanding of God Himself. Richard held that the Jews were guilty of “not placing their faith correctly” and, essentially, that the efforts of Balaam to bless the Jews at the end of the story were done not for the sake of any intrinsic “goodness” in the Jews themselves but due to the intervention of an explicitly Christian God preserving His Chosen People so that they will be present for the coming of Christ.

Lastly, in the concluding sermon of this Balaam and Balak cycle (Sermon 78), Richard emphasized the “tents and tabernacles” of the Israelites outside Balak’s city, seeing in them “symbols of justice” that are to be emulated by good Christians.<sup>83</sup> At the very moment he referred to the Jews, importantly, Richard immediately *excluded* the Jews because he concluded the sermon with the following rationale: Christians ought only to “pay debt” to the Jews for providing representational symbols, but in reflecting on how to live their own lives true Christians must give thanks solely to Christ. Richard’s exclusion of the Jews *from their own story* here reflects a theological shift that was occurring in the twelfth century between Christians and Jews.

In this context, it can be concluded that Richard of St. Victor—while giving some cognizance of the “debts” that his brethren owe to Jews in a “Judeo-Christian” religion—raised a question of whether or not the Judaic inheritance in Christianity was still needed at the end of the twelfth century. In a few other of Richard’s sermons one can observe what might be called a “transference” that occurred in medieval times that made the “*populi sui*” of Psalms 1:48 refer no longer to Hebrews, but to Christians.

83 Richard of St. Victor, *Sermo LXXVIII: In festo quorumlibet sanctorum de tertia benedictione Balaam*, PL 177: 1148 C.[Aemulemur, fratres, habitare in tabernaculis ac tentoriis iustorum. Aemulemur imitari opera, et virtutes eorum...]

The extrication of Christians from the Judaic past was also apparent in some of Richard's other sermons; for example, in Sermon 22 he praised Moses for bringing the Jews out of Egypt to the Promised Land, but then posited great hope in the "new" people of the region, the Christians who we know were occupying a Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem at the time.<sup>84</sup> In Sermon 31, he mentioned the tents and tabernacles of the Jews and their religious rites, but, again, supplanted both Jews and rituals with Christians and masses in a twelfth century context that would make it relevant to his monastic audience.<sup>85</sup> The clearest example, however, occurred in Sermon 4 where Richard used metaphors of trees and a ship (ark) that placed Mary firmly within the framework of a Judaic past that became outmoded and superseded with the birth of her son (the Tree of Jesse and the lineage of David).<sup>86</sup> In this sermon, Richard gave credit to the Jews for first believing in the "way." He qualified, however, that with the "coming of Christ" and his suffering and death as a human, Christians boarded and spread throughout the Jewish ship thanks to the apostles' spreading of the Christian faith around the world.<sup>87</sup> In this reference to the Apostolic Age, Richard depicted Christians as following Jews in "manning the oars" (*sequuntur remi*) because the Christians possessed the requisite gear to get the ship underway: "hawsers" or "ropes" (*chordae*) of *virtutes, humilitas, patientia, compassio, modestia, castitas, continentia, constantia, mansuetudo, bonitas, prudentia, fortitudo, justitia, and temperantia*.<sup>88</sup>

In these sermons, then, by attributing such virtues to the Christians and dispossessing the Jews of the same—indeed, by literally casting the Jews overboard from their own ark and replacing the "sailors" with Christians—Richard contributed to an anti-Semitic

84 Richard of St. Victor, *Sermo XII: De populo et terra*, PL 177: 938 D-941B; especially 939 B-C.

85 Richard of St. Victor, *Sermo XXXI: De tabernaculis filiorum Israel*, PL 177: 968A-971 B.

86 Richard of St. Victor, *Sermo IV: In nativitate beatae Mariae*," PL 177: 907D-911A.

87 Richard of St. Victor, *Sermo IV: In nativitate beatae Mariae*," PL 177: 908B

88 Richard of St. Victor, *Sermo IV: In nativitate beatae Mariae*," PL 177: 909C.

polemic that coincided with the rise of a “blood libel” against the Jews which spread throughout northern Europe and accused the Jews of killing Christian children during the Lenten season, especially around Passover.<sup>89</sup> Such polemics revealed the power that perceptions and depictions had on popular and royal perceptions of Jews in that Jews were being forced to live in ghettos and to wear yellow badges by the beginning of the thirteenth century, and were eventually expelled from Edward I’s England and Philip the Fair’s France by 1300.

**Conclusion: An Ark Dispossessed—  
Twelfth-Century Changes in Perceiving Jews**

Reflection upon the traditions for depicting Jews that preceded the First Crusade makes one realize that sermon portrayals from the patristic period to the twelfth century had contained none of the kind of imagery that sermon authors were employing by century’s end. Beverly Kienzle made a salient point about preaching “anti-types” in her recent book when she observed that in the twelfth-century anti-types were the most common kind of “prefigurements” sought by biblical exegetes (particularly those that contrasted typologies in the Old Testament with those of the New), and that apocalyptic expectations were included within much of the sermon writing for the period.<sup>90</sup> In reviewing these sermons, one need think only of Peter of Celle’s startling images of angels as a heavenly army racing to assist men while humanity gets “inebriated” with Grace by licking blood from the Cross at Mount Calvary in anticipation of the Second Coming to see that traditional portrayals of the Jews were being transformed into recognizable apocalyptic notions abounding in the period.<sup>91</sup>

Richard of St. Victor’s sermons offered the most sophisticated

<sup>89</sup> Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 163-174.

<sup>90</sup> Kienzle, *Cistercians, Heresy and Crusade*, 203-204.

<sup>91</sup> Sabina Flanagan, “Twelfth-Century Apocalyptic Imaginations and the Coming of Antichrist,” in *Journal of Religious History* 24 (February, 2000), 57-69.



insight into how depictions of the Jews were transformed in the twelfth century. Richard must also be numbered with Hugh and Andrew of St. Victor as a theologian who was concerned with both Christian and Jewish biblical exegesis, but in a manner that did not favor the Hebrew interpretations as those other Victorines did. This assertion contrasts with the current historical opinion of Richard, because the general consensus of intellectual historians for this period is that the Victorines were not major contributors to the rise of anti-Semitism that appeared throughout the Parisian schools and England by century's end.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, Hugh and Andrew of St. Victor shared an intense scholarly interest in the Jews, particularly with respect to the Hebrew Scriptures and their incorporation into Christian theology. Grover Zinn and Rebecca Moore have shown that Hugh was explicitly attempting to include Jews in a Christian doctrine of grace that, along with pagans who lived before the Incarnation, demanded Christianity allow for acceptance and benevolent treatment of Jews in Christian societies.<sup>93</sup> With respect to Andrew of St. Victor (d. 1175), Gilbert Dahan and Aryeh Grabois have demonstrated that Andrew found much "*Hebraica veritas*" in his study of the Torah that he thought relevant to Christians who were seeking to understand the Christian debt to, and heritage of, Judaism.

Richard of St. Victor's views regarding Jews in these sermons, then, were in *contrast* to Hugh's belief that Christians and Jews could be allied together to fight a common enemy in the "devil,"<sup>94</sup> or even Andrew's favorable incorporation of Jewish literal and figurative interpretations of the Torah.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, Richard of St. Victor,

92 A. Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, 11-22.

93 Grover A. Zinn, "History and Interpretation: 'Hebrew Truth,' Judaism, and the Victorine Exegetical Tradition," in Charlesworth, *Jews and Christians*, 130-135; Moore, *Jews and Christians*, 140-141.

94 Rebecca Moore, "The Jews in World History According to Hugh of St. Victor," *Medieval Encounters* 3:1 (1997), 1-19, at 2.

95 Rainer Berndt, "Les interprétations juives dans le *Commentaire de l'Heptateque*

by his Balak and Balaam series of sermons alone, could be placed in a group of theologians that began to shift the traditional Augustinian categorization of the Jews from necessary (and thereby protected) “witnesses” of the Christian revelation to something akin to “heretics.”<sup>96</sup>

This is an important discovery in a series of hitherto unexamined sermons by Richard of St. Victor because heresy was becoming a major concern for the Church in the late twelfth century. In the case of the Jews, the threat perceived from them was not so much a fear of Christian apostasy that accompanied the teachings of the Cathari or Peter Waldo, but what has been shown by scholars such as Dominique Iogna-Prat as a belief that the Jews “no longer belonged to humanity” because of preference for the Talmud over traditional (Christian) understandings of the Bible.<sup>97</sup>

The threat that the Jews presented in this respect—that is, a tradition of oral interpretation (Talmud) that accompanied the written Torah and, in some Christians’ eyes, corrupted traditional understandings and interpretations of Judaic prophecies (particularly in regard to the expectation of a messiah)—was one expressed with increasing regularity in European Christian intellectual circles from the late eleventh century onwards. For example, “schoolmen” such as Gilbert Crispin and Odo of Cambrai (as well as theologians like Peter the Venerable) had been writing tracts *Contra Judaeos* that often characterized the Jews as possessed of a truth that was necessary as a precondition for Christianity, but that was “*vetus*,” or “old,” just as the Torah was perceived as an “old testament” in contrast to the “*novum*” Word (*Verbum*) of the Christian Gospels.<sup>98</sup>

By urging Christians to take refuge in a “spiritual” Jerusalem when the real city was under siege (as it increasingly became in the 1160s and 1170s under Nur ad-Din and Saladin), Richard represents d’André de Saint-Victor,” in *Recherches augustiniennes* 24 (1989), 199-240; Herman Hailperin, “Jewish ‘Influence’ on Christian Biblical Scholars of the Middle Ages,” in *Historia Judaica* 4 (1942), 163-174.

96 Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*.

97 Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion*, 361-362.

98 Anna Sapir Abulafia, “Twelfth-Century Humanism and the Jews,” in *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews*, ed. Ora Limor and Guy Stroumsa (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1996), 163-169.

a shift in theological thinking that obfuscated geographical thinking about the Middle East, but which also started to attribute the cause of Christian defeats in the Levant to “others” who might be responsible for the misfortunes of the age—those scapegoats in the late twelfth century increasingly took the forms of Christian heretics and Jews.<sup>99</sup>

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*Conquest of Jerusalem 1099*