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10 Christian Hatred of the Other: Theological Rhetoric vs. Political Reality

Any depiction of medieval antisemitism confronts the question of where to draw the line between verbal theological polemic and incitement to physical violence against the adversary. Irrational hatred could and did lead to the violence that fostered the portrayal of Western Christianity as a ‘persecuting society’.¹ This also raises the question of the extent to which theological animosity was linked to real Others – contemporary Jews and Muslims. It can be difficult to precisely identify the distinction between theological adversary and religious-political enemy when examining the Crusades, Christian society’s military or violent action against unbelievers within and without Western Europe.²

This paper considers this distinction and the metaphorical portrayal of the enemy in three contexts. It first undertakes a comparative consideration of Peter the Venerable’s anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim thought, viewing him as a touchstone of medieval Christian thought and rhetoric regarding the Other. Then, using medieval Scandinavia and the Baltic as a test case, it considers the question of whether anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim rhetoric and violence required the presence of the Other. It concludes with a comparison of the attitude toward the Other in the Latin East, where the adversary was an actual presence, and in Europe, where the adversary often assumed virtual form.

10.1 Peter the Venerable on Jews and Muslims

Peter’s virulent anti-Jewish attitude is well represented in his polemical treatise, *Against the Inveterate Obduracy of the Jews*. The publication of the critical edition of Peter’s *Adversus Judaeos* in 1985 seems to have sparked renewed scholarly interest in this figure.³ Various scholars have portrayed Peter as a landmark figure in Christian anti-Jewish polemic. Thus, Gavin Langmuir views Peter as defining antisemitism,⁴ and Anna Abulafia,⁵ Denise Bouthillier and

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1 Moore 2007.

2 On the connection between anti-Jewish polemic and promoting the Crusades, see Abulafia 1998, 45–70.

3 PV, *Adversus Iud.* 1985.

4 Langmuir 1990, 197–208.

5 Abulafia 1995.

Jean-Pierre Torrell⁶ underscore his demonization of his adversary. More recently Jeremy Cohen⁷ and Dominique Iogna-Prat⁸ put forth the view that Peter the Venerable exemplified Christendom's association of its anti-Jewish polemic with its anti-Muslim struggle. Peter, the grand abbot of Cluny (1122–1156), was rightly lauded by his secretary and biographer as a champion fighting for the Christian faith “with the swords of Divine words [...] in order to humble the Satanic pride and arrogance which rise up against the greatness of God”.⁹ His polemical works include the treatise against the Petrobrusian heresy, his book against the Jews, and his anti-Islamic *Contra sectam Saracenorum*, based on a compilation he commissioned of *Summa totius haeresis Saracenorum* – a summary of anti-Islamic texts. His works demonstrate that he was indeed a fighter for the faith, a leader of the medieval Christian polemic against ‘the religions of the book’.

Peter's anti-Jewish polemic starts out in a conventional mould based on centuries of *adversus judaeos* literature, but then takes an innovative approach. If the first chapters of his book revolve around the correct interpretation of scriptural verses, chapter five sees Peter launching a new type of attack; a full-fledged assault on the Talmud, a century before the fateful disputation of Paris that led to its burning in 1244.¹⁰

In the first four chapters of his work, Peter draws upon scriptural authority and uses rational refutation in an intense effort to convince himself and his virtual adversary that the Christian exegesis of the topical Christological biblical verses provides their sole true meaning. His endeavour to prove that Christ was the Son of God as foretold by the prophets, that He was truly the deity, that His kingdom was eternal and Heavenly, and that the Messiah had already come, constituted well-trodden paths. The Christian exegesis of these biblical prooftexts had been rehearsed for centuries, dramatized in the *Ordo prophetarum* – the theatrical performance of the prophets foretelling Jesus – and sculpted in Romanesque churches, depicting the prophets with their scrolls containing prophesies about Christ.¹¹ The stubborn Jews who refused to be persuaded by these verses were what Jeremy Cohen has termed hermeneutical Jews.¹² Ex-

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⁶ Bouthillier and Torrell 1984.

⁷ Cohen 1999, 245–270.

⁸ Iogna-Prat 1998 (English edn., 2002).

⁹ PV, *Contra Sarracenos*, 228.

¹⁰ Friedman 1999. Cf. Cohen 1999, 262–265, who does not emphasize the connection between the twelfth-to-thirteenth century concept of the Talmud and its anti-Christian passages.

¹¹ Friedman 1984.

¹² Cohen 1999, 2–4.

Fig. 2: Douai, Bibliothèque Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, MS 381, fol. 131r, initial U (originally Anchin XII); the illuminator is probably Siger (1156–1166). Published by permission, copyright CNRS, IHRT.

Peter the Venerable instructing a Jew. Although Peter is seated, he looms taller than the standing Jew whose dark countenance is in contrast to Peter's bright face. The posture of the Jew's twisted body, as if defending himself with his right hand, while raising a finger of his left hand, shows him as inferior, but not giving way to the truth being preached to him. His disproportionately large head bestows a sinister appearance on the Jew.

cept for one instance, where Peter claims to know the contemporary Jewish interpretation,¹³ this part of his polemic has very little to do with the actual Other. The adversary is in fact a virtual construct, not a real person. (See fig. 2.)

Peter's argument in the long appendix to the fourth chapter is grounded in the triumphal spread of Christianity and past and contemporary miracles. The appendix also takes up the question of the binding power of the Mosaic Law and its commandments, which had been transformed in Christianity from the outer shell, the *cortex*, the word that kills, to the inner meaning, the *medulla*, the spirit that quickens. Here, we find a more heated tone, as these were topics debated in actual Christian-Jewish dialogue.¹⁴ In his fifth and final chapter, Peter moves to post-biblical texts, as if Jewish stubbornness was grounded in a secret alternative to the New Testament, namely, the Talmud. For Peter, it was the Talmud that prevented the Jews from seeing the light. All that was necessary was to prove that Talmudic texts – mainly the haggadic, legendary

¹³ PV, *Adversus Iud.*, iv, 68–69, lines 29–34.

¹⁴ For example, see Limor 1991, 35–51.

passages – were ridiculous, blasphemous, and false. Unlike the earlier chapters, this part of the dispute seems to be directed not at a virtual, historical Jew, but rather at Peter's contemporaries. It was based on the assumption that the level of Jewish belief in the Talmud was equivalent to a belief in a holy scripture, and that they understood its stories literally, which shows scant knowledge of contemporary Jewish thought. Peter then went further, offering two new arguments. First he asks three times whether the obstinate Jew who refuses to be convinced by his polemic and convert to Christianity can be seen as a human being or should rather be counted a beast.¹⁵ Second, he intimates that if the irrational Jew believes in an alternative tradition, then perhaps the Jews' function as book bearers, bringing testimony to the Christian truth, has outlived its purpose, and it is no longer necessary to protect them. Both the threefold dehumanization that frames Jews as beasts and the implicit questioning of whether or not they deserve protection were to have dire consequences for later generations.¹⁶

Peter's angry outburst against the Talmudic text – "I would condemn it and its perpetrators to the flames" – was probably not meant to be taken literally.¹⁷ However, those inflammatory words may have sown a fateful seed that culminated in the burning of the Talmud and other books in Paris a century later. It is in this chapter that Peter's anti-Judaism explodes into a harsh diatribe. Almost as if shouting, Peter writes, "who would contain our hands from your blood if not for the explicit verse *ne occidas eos* [kill them not]?"¹⁸ The Augustinian exegesis understands this verse as a scriptural proscription against Christians killing Jews, who have to be dispersed like Cain the fratricide and humiliated.¹⁹ In use for ages, in Peter's mouth the tone of this argument straddles the border between polemic and violence.

It is perhaps Peter's diatribe against the inhuman Jew in the context of the crucifixion that enabled Christians to cross the line from hatred of Jews to violence. In chapter three of his book, Peter abandons the intellectual tone and embarks on a tirade against the inhuman Jew: "Were you not dogs, when like dogs you thirsted for blood and so very rabidly almost licked it up saying 'His blood be upon us and upon our children'?"²⁰ This emotive, angry reaction to the story of the Passion penetrated other countries and persisted for centuries.

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¹⁵ PV, *Adversus Iud.*, v, 125, lines 15–26.

¹⁶ Cf. Cohen, 1999, 261–264.

¹⁷ PV, *Adversus Iud.*, v, 166, lines 1444–1446.

¹⁸ PV, *Adversus Iud.*, v, 141, lines 603–615.

¹⁹ Augustine 1891, 339, 341; Unterseher 2009.

²⁰ PV, *Adversus Iud.*, III, 57, lines 536–552.

Stemming from the literary figure of the Jew in the New Testament, it was an emotional-religious hatred that required no real contemporary Jews, but could easily spill over into violence against real people.²¹ The threefold *nescio utrum homo sit* – I do not know if the Jew is human, I doubt that he who has a heart of stone could be called human, leaves little ambiguity as to the answer.²²

Curiously, when Peter wrote his anti-Islam treatise, he offered the claim that Muslims ought to learn from the tolerant attitude of Christian polemicists: They need only follow the example of the Christians who argue with Jews. Hearing the Jews blaspheme, the Christians do not go into a fury, but listen patiently and make scholarly, wise replies.²³

Just as Peter made efforts to learn about post-biblical Jewish literature – although he misunderstood it – he went to great lengths to learn about Islam. During his visit to Spain in 1142, he commissioned a translation of the Qurʾān and a corpus of Christian weapons against it: Robert of Ketton's *Fables of the Saracens*; the *Liber generationis* (the legends of the prophets' lives); the *Doctrina Muhammed* (the story of four Jews asking Muḥammad a hundred questions), and the *Apologia* or *Risālah* of al-Kindī (a ninth-century dialogue between a Christian and a Muslim).

His own book against Islam differs greatly in tone from the *Adversus Iudaeos*. The well-known prologue is inviting: "I do address you, not as our men often do with arms, but with words, not with violence but with reason, not with hate but love".²⁴ Peter expands upon this motif: "I love you, loving you I write you". In this case as well the protagonist is virtual: "I address verbally those whom I have never seen and perhaps never shall".²⁵ The book is also meant for internal consumption, to strengthen the faith of the Christians

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²¹ Resnick 2012, 40, even claims that Peter's book became something of a favourite among early-twentieth-century German antisemites.

²² PV, *Adversus Iud.*, III, 57–58, lines 562–570.

²³ PV, *Contra Sarracenos*, 50, 96–98:

Imitamini saltem in hoc nostros, qui, cum frequentem cum Iudaeis, quorum inter ipsos plurima multitudo subiecta moratur, sermonem conserant, et multa ac paene universa fidei Christianae contraria ab ipsis audient, non in furiam commoventur nec velut contra blasphemus in eorum necem insurgunt, sed audiunt patienter, respondent sapienter

[Imitate at least in this us (i.e., the Christians) who frequently engage in conversation with the Jews, of whom a great multitude stay subject among them, and although they hear from them many and nearly all things contrary to the Christian faith, they are not moved to fury nor aroused to the blasphemers' slaughter, but rather listen patiently and answer wisely].

²⁴ PV, *Contra Sarracenos*, 24, 62.

²⁵ PV, *Contra Sarracenos*, 24, 62.

threatened by Islam's successes and to provide them with arguments for a possible confrontation. The humane, loving salutation is meant to open the door to dialogue in the name of humanity and asks them to listen, even if they do not agree.²⁶ Nevertheless, during his refutation of Islam, Peter utters harsh words against Muḥammad, declaring him a false prophet. Peter identifies the essence of prophecy as proclaiming through divine inspiration unknown things, be they past, present, or future, and finds the Qur'ān to contain no prophecy. There is also the lack of miracles like those Peter used so proudly both in his book *De Miraculis* and against the Jews. But ultimately, if he failed to convince the adversary, his reaction was to demonize Muḥammad and his sectaries as a sum total of heresies, both Christian and Jewish. The explanation for Muslim success was the coming of the Antichrist. Cluny was God's citadel besieged by demons, and polemical works were the defensive ammunition.

Peter's greater tolerance for Islam as compared to his inveterate hatred of Judaism was evident not only in his theoretical, polemical works, but also in his concrete advice on how to act. In a very famous letter written to Crusading King Louis VII, Peter makes a clear distinction between the two enemies of Christendom:

Why should we pursue the enemies of the Christian faith in far and distant lands while vile blasphemers far worse than any Saracens, namely the Jews, who are not far from us, but who live in our midst, blaspheme, abuse and trample on Christ and the Christian Sacraments so freely and insolently with impunity.²⁷

Again straddling the thin line between incitement and persecution, Peter reminds the king of the scriptural command *ne occidas eos*,²⁸ according to which the Jews are not to be killed, suggesting instead that they be taxed to finance the Crusade, alleviating the Church's financial burden: "Let their lives be saved and their money taken away so that the blasphemous Jews' money would help the Christian to fight the Saracens".²⁹ The letter finds the current anti-Muslim feelings to be theologically justified, and uses the same criteria to direct hatred toward the Jews:

If one ought to hate the Saracens, even though they believe like us that Christ was born of a virgin and agree with us on many other things, because they still deny that he was

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²⁶ PV, *Contra Sarracenos*, 28, 66.

²⁷ PV, *Letters*, letter 130, I, 327–330 (328).

²⁸ Psalms 58. 12 (Hebrew Bible Psalms 59. 12).

²⁹ PV, *Letters*, 328–329.

God and son of God [...] How much more should one hate and execrate the Jews, who understanding of Christ and the Christian faith, reject, blaspheme and deride him.³⁰

Clearly the Jews had a special place in Peter's heart. His stated rationale for having the Jews finance the Crusade mixes their theological divergence with socioeconomic factors: The Jews are social parasites who trade in stolen goods.

The thief hands over the vessels of Christ's body and blood to those who killed him, who heaped contumely and injury upon him when he was amongst the living [...] They do not cease from wounding him with their blasphemous words as much as they dare [...] Verily Christ feels the Jewish abuse of the vessels, themselves insensitive, sacred to him [...] I have often heard from veracious men that those infamous ones use these celestial vessels [...] in a way of which it would be horrible to think of and detestable to speak of.³¹

The language of this accusation, which derives from rumours about the profanation of holy vessels, resembles that used some years later in the blood libel accusations of Jewish desecration of the Host, as if again crucifying Jesus.³²

10.2 The Northern countries: Hatred of the virtual Other

Peter had to distinguish between the virtual Jew based on the biblical and historical Jew, the so-called hermeneutical Jew, and the actual Jews who lived in France in his day, whom he targeted viciously in his letter to Louis VII. As there were no Jews living in Scandinavia or late medieval England, the only Jew that existed there was the theoretical, virtual Jew.³³ In such a situation, where both Jews and Muslims could only be virtual enemies, we might perhaps expect a more tolerant attitude, but this was not the case.

The burning of heretics and others perceived as endangering Christianity was neither Peter's invention nor a unique idea. But the burning of the nine traitors in Visby in 1350 could not have happened without a solid background of loathing and fear laid down for centuries by mainstream Christian intellectuals, such as Peter the Venerable. Underlying the burning at Visby was the belief in an international plot against Christians and Christianity.³⁴ Although there

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³⁰ PV, *Letters*, 328–329; Friedman 1978.

³¹ PV, *Letters*, 329.

³² Rubin 1999, 1–48.

³³ See, however, Haastrup 2003.

³⁴ In the first instance of ritual murder accusations, in Norwich 1144, Thomas of Monmouth circulated a story about an annual meeting of Jews in Rouen that decided where to kill a

were no Jews in Gotland at the time, the irrational fear of the Black Death gave birth to the libel of Jews poisoning the water and plotting to destroy the entire Christian population. With no actual Jews to persecute in Sweden at that time, Christian enemies had to do and could be scapegoated as the messengers of the Jews. In this case, the culprit Dideric (Tidericus) was burned as an accomplice in the plot of two mysterious Jews, Moses and Aron. Nine other Christians were accused of spreading the Black Death by poisoning the wells – two of them clerics.³⁵ Thus, no actual Jews were needed to breed antisemitism in the Swedish Gotland: The medieval Christian heritage was sufficient. Taking into account the strong German influence there, this Northern antisemitism seems to have been part of the imported Christian heritage.³⁶ The agency of the medieval Scandinavians lay in their use of the images to solve a current social problem and to transfer hatred to another adversary. It should be noted, for example, that, at the same time, the Sámi, living in north and east Norway, were still mostly polytheistic pagans; yet they were left alone until the seventeenth century and not persecuted on religious grounds.³⁷ However, the old Danish texts that are blatantly anti-Jewish are centred mostly on the devotional ritual of identifying with the suffering Christ, a trend that has its roots in emotional, mystical texts such as those by Pseudo-Bonaventura and St. Birgitta.³⁸ The detailed descriptions of the tortures inflicted on Jesus by the Jews go much farther than the polemical outburst noted above and were powerful lessons in contempt.³⁹

David Nirenberg has even claimed that ‘Jewishness’ became a feature attached not only to the Jews. He asks, “Why is it that the fear of Judaizing reached a new peak in Western Europe at precisely the moment when Jews had virtually disappeared from it?”⁴⁰ He shows that the accusation of ‘Judaiz-

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Christian child. Thomas of Monmouth 1896, 93. Peter the Venerable mentions a contemporary Jewish leader in Rouen, who, although a head of Jewry, did not qualify in his opinion as a Jewish king. PV, *Adversus Iud.*, iv, 70, lines 77–79.

35 See the article by Cordelia Heß in this volume. The source is a letter from Lübeck to Count Otto of Lüneburg telling the story that Tidericus had met the Jews in Germany (*Codex diplomaticus Lubecensis* 1871, no. 110, 105–106). The verdict was handed down on 1 June 1350, and Dideric was burned a month later for planning to poison all Christendom. Both the accusation and the means of execution at the stake were exceptional in Scandinavia and were probably imported from Germany.

36 Berulfsen 1958, 123–144; Gregg 1997, 171.

37 Solbakk 2007.

38 Adams 2013a, 18–36.

39 Adams 2013a and 2013b; Cohen 2007, 85–135.

40 Nirenberg 2013, 218.

ing’ gained new social and political power precisely when the Jews disappeared, because once ‘Jewishness’ was rendered invisible, it became more ominous and threatening. In her books on a Flemish moneylender, Myriam Greilsammer attests to the repercussions of this phenomenon of ‘virtual Jewishness’ for non-Jews. In a society with no Jews, the metaphors and diabolical characteristics could be transferred to a Christian adversary.⁴¹ Anthony Bale demonstrated the same phenomenon in England after the expulsion. “Reinforced by religious polemic, ‘universal’ currency, and ancient pedigree, anti-Semitic stories were implicitly ‘true’, even as their distinctive power rested in their fantastical, fleeting, and unofficial elements”.⁴²

In Scandinavian literature, the virtual Jews were strongly connected to the Passion stories. As was the case earlier in Europe, the liturgy of Easter and Christmas were replete with anti-Jewish insinuations. *Mary’s Lamentations at the Cross* – the West Norse parallel to the *planctus sive lamentaci Mariae* and the *Stabat Mater* – depicts an emotive scene. The refrain: “Why did the most horrible Jews crucify you?” could not have failed to raise emotions.⁴³ The stations of agony and the depicting of the sadistic, mocking Jews illustrated and amplified the accusation that the Jews “heaped contumely and injury upon him when he was amongst the living”.⁴⁴

Richard Cole’s “The Fantasy of Violence against Jews in Medieval Scandinavia”⁴⁵ demonstrates the hatred toward virtual Jews, and the ease with which – as was the case at Visby – the line between emotion and violence could be crossed. However, where Peter and his legacy of anti-Jewish outbursts may have indirectly influenced the newly Christianized societies in the North, they did not seem to inherit his preference for Muslims over Jews. In the case of Muslims, or Saracens, their animosity found a different outlet.

10.3 The attitude toward the Other in the Latin East and Europe

Peter’s attitude toward Islam did not alter the attitude of the members of Crusader society who fought against the Muslims in the Near East. For them, their

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⁴¹ Greilsammer 2009; Greilsammer 2012.

⁴² Bale 2006, 6–7. See also Bale 2008, 23–44.

⁴³ “Avve mik, avve mik, son minn sæle, krossfestu þik hinir grimmu iudar?” *Mariu Saga* 1871, 1010.

⁴⁴ PV, *Letters*, 329; Adams 2013a, 14–24.

⁴⁵ Cole 2013.

Fig. 3: Luttrell Psalter, British Library, Add. MS 42130, fol. 82, margin. Copyright The British Library Board.

A miniature of two caparisoned knights jousting; generally believed to be Richard the Lionheart and Saladin. Note Saladin's dark blue countenance, long crooked nose, and the black face on his shield as his heraldic sign.

main enemy was the Muslim, not as a virtual concept, but as a military adversary who was engaged on the battlefield. Muslims were described as pagans in Crusader chronicles, even by later authors, who knew very well that the Muslims were in fact not pagans. Thus, when the Teutonic Knights moved from the Holy Land to the Baltic in the late thirteenth century, they brought with them the metaphor of themselves as Maccabees opposing the pagans,⁴⁶ with whom they equated the Muslims in the Holy Land.⁴⁷ Intriguingly, we find a different metaphorical usage in the North: Although their enemies in the North were actual pagans, the Teutonic chronicles refer to them as Saracens. Thus in Scandinavia and in the Baltic, Muslims were *blamen* – black or dark men – a reference to their depiction with a diabolic, dark countenance in European poetry and illustrations.⁴⁸ (See fig. 3.) By importing this concept of the Other, their pagan neighbours became Saracens and it was therefore possible to transfer the anti-Muslim Holy Land Crusader propaganda to the North.

We must, however, recall that the focus of the early Crusades and of the Crusaders' mission was the Holy Land, and even though interreligious war

⁴⁶ Fischer 2005, 59–71; Ehlers 2001, 22.

⁴⁷ Murray 2010, 413–429.

⁴⁸ For example, see the illustration in the *Luttrell Psalter* that depicts Saladin with dark blue skin and a crooked nose; Strickland 2003, 167. For *blamen* as dark, not necessarily blue, see Magerøy 2007.

raged there throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the demonic, pagan, and threatening image of the Saracen did not take root in the Holy Land. Although the chroniclers of the First Crusade almost consistently identified Muslims as enemy pagans, later descriptions called them Turks or Saracens (differentiating between Seljuks in the North and Fatimids in the South).⁴⁹ Nor did the European anti-Jewish image become prominent in the Latin East.

Certainly, both Jews and Saracens were butchered in the frenzy of the conquest of Jerusalem in July 1099.⁵⁰ Although the atrocities against the inhabitants of Jerusalem may be seen as ‘common practice’ in the case of a lengthy siege and the storming of a city,⁵¹ the extent of the carnage, as well as the proud descriptions of the blood flowing in the streets, seem to have provided an outlet for the anti-Muslim propaganda of the First Crusade. But, as preserved in the thirteenth-century assizes, Crusader law did not seem to assign Jews or Muslims a different status from that of other conquered populations, including the Oriental Christians.⁵² Literary sources from both sides show that whereas the Muslims were perceived as a military enemy, in everyday life both Jews and Muslims were viewed as human beings and not as diabolical demons.⁵³ Thus the political-social reality made it possible to build a coexistence that alternated between war and peace, without transferring irrational European hatred to that arena. In the North, the image of the enemy as a Saracen

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49 See Ambroise, a western poet, who called the Muslim enemy “Turcs”, “Sarazins” indiscriminately, but sometimes called them “paens gent [pagans]”. For example, see Ambroise 2003, lines 7232–7353.

50 Kedar 2004, 15–75. According to Jewish sources from the Cairo Genizah, at least some Jews managed to escape death and were ransomed by their coreligionists in Egypt. Goitein 1952, 129–147. Only one western source, the poet Gilo of Toucy, mentions the Crusaders of 1099 particularly targeting the Jews. All the other chroniclers seem indifferent to the Jews, at this point. Prawer 1988, 26–33.

51 France 1994, 355–356.

52 *Assises de la cour de Bourgeois* 1843, no. 241, 171–172 where “un Jude, ou un Sarasin, ou un Samaritan, ou un Nestorin, ou un Grifon, ou un Jacopin ou un Ermin” are treated the same way in court, and they all have to take an oath on their specific holy books. In cap. 24 of the Cyprian *Abrégé du livre des Assises de la cour de bourgeois* 1843, 254–255, Jews and Saracens are listed among those not allowed to buy a plot of land called *borgezie* without any differentiation. *Livres des assises* 1839, no. 236, details the viscount’s obligations in the court of the market: “He is moreover obliged by law to dispense justice in the prescribed manner to Muslims as much as to the Syrian, to the Syrian as much as to the Jew and to the Jew as much as to the Samaritan and to all manner of persons as much as to the Christians, for this is what is lawful and right according to the assizes”.

53 Thus the assizes see them as human like the Franks: “Car encores scient il Suriens et Grifons ou Judes ou Samaritans ou Nestourin ou Sarasins, si sont il auci homes les Francs.” *Livres des assises* 1839, no. 236; Kedar 1990, 135–174.

took root, and the irrational hatred of the Jews, even without any real Jews to hate, remained part of the Christian heritage.

Peter's highbrow treatises probably never reached the Northern countries. On the other hand, his famous letter to King Louis, with its practical repercussions, may have had a wider sphere of influence. In any case, anti-Jewish feelings became the norm in contemporary Christian culture. As for Peter's attitude toward Islam, it was exceptional in Europe, where the more aggressive Crusader propaganda carried greater weight. In the Latin East, where the Muslim was a military enemy, the irrational, mythic hatred and loathing of the religious adversary was less current. It might not have made much difference to the victims killed in war, but there were many instances of grudging respect between the enemies and little demonization.⁵⁴ Curiously, in Western Europe, the Muslims were labelled pagans, and in the Northern countries, the pagan enemy was labelled Saracen. Surprisingly, the greatest hatred of the Other is manifested during this period, when the Other is virtual and not actually present.

I conclude on a personal note. In 1967, before antisemitism in the North was influenced by Middle Eastern politics, my brother was stranded in a cabin (*hytte*) in Jotunheimen, during a snowstorm. Among the people with whom he shared his room was another hiker, who upon hearing that my brother came from Israel, stared at him and explained: "Jeg har aldri sett en jøde før [I've never seen a Jew before]". This was not a symptom of hatred, but rather curiosity regarding an alien, unknown Other; apparently he expected him to have a distinctive look based on stories he knew.⁵⁵ It is when the medieval heritage of fear and loathing of the Other, based originally on religious myths and traditions, takes root that such feelings become dangerous. Thus, polemics that seem purely intellectual in nature could, nonetheless, be very explosive and breed anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim feelings even – or especially – when there was no Other in the vicinity to hate.

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54 For example Ambroise 2003: he called Saif e Din (Saphadin), a wise Saracen (line 7390) and claimed that Saladin sent a message to King Richard, "saying that by his faith and by the God whom he supported, that he so honoured his valour, his great-heartedness and his skill [Qu'il preiset tant sa grant pröesce, Son grant cuer e sa vistesce] (lines 11786–11787), that if his land were taken in any way during his lifetime, then from among all the princes he had seen, Richard would be the prince whom he would be most willing to have taken it from him by force and conquer it" (lines 11772–11795).

55 Resnick 2012, 13–34.

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